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LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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William Pitt
First Earl of Chatham.

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[illegible] PITT
[illegible]

BY ALBERT VON RUVILLE

TRANSLATED BY
H. J. CHAYTOR, M.A.
ASSISTED BY
MARY MORISON
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
PROFESSOR HUGH E. EGERTON

IN THREE VOLUMES

Volume I

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NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
1907

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It is a somewhat humiliating reflection that it should have been reserved to a German scholar to write the first detailed biography of the elder Pitt which has appeared in recent years. The lives written by Mr. W. D. Green and by Mr. Frederic Harrison in the *Heroes of the Nations* and in the *Twelve English Statesmen* series are in their way admirable; but the exigencies of space forbade the exhaustive treatment of events made by Dr. Albert von Ruville. The latter has made great use of the Newcastle Manuscripts in the British Museum, that mine, which has even now by no means been worked to its full extent, and of the diplomatic reports preserved in the Record Offices in London and Berlin. When the bearing of the evidence depends so much on the prejudices and inclinations of the witness, and when the mass of material is so great as to necessitate selection, there will always be room for much difference of opinion. Dr. von Ruville at once proves his title to be considered an impartial critic by the manner in which he deals with the stock German charge against the British negotiators of the Treaty of Paris, 1763, of having betrayed their ally Frederick the Great. With this instance before us we must admit that, if we find ourselves differing from the author, the fault does not arise from any lack in him of the judicial temper.

How far, then, does the William Pitt revealed to us by the careful research of this foreign onlooker agree with the old idea of him with which we have been familiar from our childhood? It is very satisfactory to find that, while here and there details may be open to controversy, the broad lines of

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the picture stand out, so far as facts, not inferences, are concerned, as they have come down to us. Dr. von Ruville describes Pitt as 'a rock, a dominating landmark, weather-worn on either side by the nature of preceding and subsequent periods, and yet forming a self-contained and uniform whole.' I should prefer to compare him to some lofty beacon, whose brilliant lights were sometimes the means of safety to mariners at sea, while at other times their eclipse brought danger to those expecting them. Pitt's whole career is in some ways in the nature of a paradox. The grandson of the precursor of the Nabobs, he was their fierce denouncer. Owing his political life to the system of pocket boroughs, he was the earliest champion of reform. The greatest of empire-builders, he was also the champion of colonial liberties. Moreover, not only is Pitt's own position difficult to grasp, the political situation of the times was also singularly complex. A minister had then three independent powers to reckon with: the king, Parliament, and public opinion. The time had been when the minister had been literally the king's servant. The time was coming when the minister should become the embodiment of parliamentary opinion. There was in store a still later time, when an extended suffrage should fuse in one the public opinion of the people and the voice of Parliament. But all this was in Pitt's life in the womb of the future. Nor did the complexity even end here. The forces of the crown were divided, and men did not know whether to recognise the king in *esse* or the king in *posse*—George II. or Leicester House.

Whatever a statesman's ideals, he has to accommodate himself to the public life of his day or else to retire beaten; and the tragedy of Pitt's position is the necessity placed upon the terrible cornet of horse to play the opportunist in the squalid field of eighteenth-century politics. Dr. von Ruville has busied himself to show how laboriously and anxiously Pitt played the dirty game; none the less, through it all, can we descry signs of aloofness and superiority, as of a brand rescued from the fire. It must, I think, be confessed that Dr.

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von Ruville carries his impartiality to such lengths as sometimes to appear lacking in sympathy. As an instance may be noted the estimate given of Pitt's oratory. An elaborate attempt is made to separate the manner and the matter of his speeches, and to show that the latter was often of an inferior character. But, in the first place, the substance of Pitt's speeches has come down to us in so questionable a shape that it would be rash to base conclusions on what passes under his name. At the time faithful reporting had hardly come into being, and eloquence of the nature of Pitt's even now is hard to put on paper. (I have been told, on good authority, that the reporters were completely baffled by the late Lord Cranbrook's speaking when in the House of Commons.) Moreover, it is surely idle to ask of oratory more than that it should influence the immediate hearers, and of the effect of Pitt's speeches all who heard him are agreed. It is surely hard measure to ask of an orator that he should make actual converts by his arguments of a hostile majority. Let us set by the side of Dr. von Ruville's somewhat depreciatory estimate the often quoted words of his contemporary Butler: 'Wonderful as was his eloquence, it was attended with this most important effect, that it impressed every hearer with a conviction that there was something in him even finer than his words; that the man was infinitely greater than the orator.' It is in these words that we find the keynote of his greatness. With him the language was the nebulous matter ready to cohere into action; and this is why the sworn foe of parliamentary speechifying, and all that it implies, Carlyle himself, finds in Pitt a 'radiant' spirit after his own heart. With all respect to Dr. von Ruville's learning, we may presume to differ when he writes, 'In this, as in all cases, his objects were eminently practical and selfish. He supported everything that could help his plans and opposed all that thwarted them; at a comparatively early date he had conceived the idea, though he had not elaborated it, that an excellent foundation of success might be laid by the strictest possible

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observance of political morality and by the adoption of a certain lofty and disinterested attitude towards sordid questions of ways and means. In the case of parliamentary corruption these two motives became operative. So long as Walpole was in power, corruption was a direct obstacle to Pitt's advance: hence he attacked the practice.' Had such been the real Pitt it would hardly have been necessary for Dr. von Ruville to write those volumes of his biography.

Having made this *caveat*, which will apply to other instances than the one here given, we may note some of the points on which Dr. von Ruville is able to throw new light. It is interesting to find that Pitt, when paymaster-general, had no great interest in financial affairs, but was already eagerly accumulating accurate information upon the events of the war. Already he was in mind anticipating his great work, the actual conduct, on paper, of campaigns. The story of the events which led up to Pitt's ejectment from office on November 20, 1755, though it contains no fresh material, has never before been told in such detail. It seems clear that recognition of the fact that he would never receive the position due to his abilities from either the Duke of Newcastle or the king drove Pitt into active opposition. Considering the men at the helm, and the conduct of affairs, the path of patriotism might well lie in relentless opposition. When Pitt proposed a militia bill, such as was afterwards passed, Newcastle wrote: 'I am afraid the principles of it may prove *dangerous* to the country. The expense would be certain and immense, viz. £200,000 per annum at least. . . . But, that which of all things I dread, it will breed up our people to a love of arms and military government.' If the British government had provoked before they were able to defend, and had neglected after provocation, an attitude of opposition hardly requires serious defending. In Pitt's words, Newcastle's government was a child driving a go-cart on the edge of a precipice. Nor, while opposition was in these circumstances inevitable, was it wonderful that

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a statesman conscious of capacity should be ambitious to exercise his powers on his country's behalf. Hitherto the way had been barred by the veto of the king, without whose favour, as we have seen, neither parliamentary influence nor popular favour could avail. Of parliamentary influence, however, Pitt at the summit of his power had very little, and popular favour had to be acquired. Dr. von Ruville explains Pitt's refusal to act with Newcastle in the autumn of 1756, by the consciousness which he possessed of the treachery practised upon him by the latter in the affairs of the young court. Be this as it may, he did not really strengthen his position by forming an independent ministry under the nominal headship of the Duke of Devonshire. The confidence of George II. had not yet been obtained, and the ministry existed in Parliament at the mercy of Newcastle's battalions. The shifty Newcastle, however, had no desire to return to office at this moment, and it appears to have been the influence of the Duke of Cumberland with the king, rather than weakness in the House of Commons, which cut short the existence of the ministry. It seems proved that it was the Duke of Cumberland who made the dismissal of Pitt a condition precedent to accepting the command of the British contingent on the Continent. In considering Pitt's first appearance upon the stage as first minister, Dr. von Ruville holds that he was wrong in not insisting upon receiving the seals of the northern department, by which means he would have retained in his hands the regulation of affairs in Germany. But to maintain this is to ignore the fact that Pitt already recognised that in colonial and maritime supremacy lay the future of the British Empire. Short as was Pitt's stay in office, it was long enough to bring home to the consciousness of the nation the sense of his superiority, and in the outburst which arose at his dismissal the power of public opinion made itself felt. That public opinion, even in autocratic France, was already beginning to be a power was seen by the action of Choiseul, who, when breaking off the peace negotiations in 1761, published an

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explanation of his action to the French people. The interregnum, which followed, was mainly due to the feeling of helplessness of English public men before a situation of extreme difficulty and danger. The formation of a Newcastle-Pitt administration was rendered possible by the conviction of the former that thus only could a protection be found against foreign danger, and by the recognition of the latter that, without parliamentary ascendency, the public opinion behind him would beat its wings to no purpose. Accordingly Pitt borrowed the Duke of Newcastle's majority to carry on the business of the country. Newcastle retained the full control of patronage and influence, while Pitt for the first time found a free hand in the conduct of affairs.

The English reader will hardly need the help of Dr. von Ruville's erudition to realise the use which Pitt made of that power. From his entrance into office in June 1757 a new tone is heard in the imperial despatches, which was the herald of victory. Especially in his behaviour towards the American colonies, those difficult and testy children growing to manhood, Pitt displayed the full measure of his strength and magnetism. For whoever cared to read, the records of the past were full of impotent attempts at coercion and slim methods of evasion. Pitt, first among British statesmen, evolved a more excellent way, by which voluntary effort should unite the scattered energies of the empire. The colonies were urged to make special efforts to raise a force of twenty thousand men; but the appeal was based solely on the urgency of the common danger. The claim of right was dropped, and there was no longer the irritating attempt to dictate the exact quota which each province should contribute. It was not thought expedient to limit the zeal and ardour of any of the provinces by making a repartition of the force to be raised by each respectively. Full discretion was left to the governors to issue commissions to such as would be most likely to quicken and effectuate the speedy levying of the greatest number of men. In another matter Pitt showed

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himself well informed of the feelings of the Americans. Under an order of 1756 general and field officers with provincial commissions ranked only as senior captains when serving in conjunction with regular troops. In consequence the whole provincial army might have been put under the command of any British major. Pitt forthwith established that all officers of the provincial forces, up to the rank of colonel inclusive, were to rank with officers of the regular army, according to their several respective commissions. While the colonies were urged to provide for the levying, the clothing, and pay of the forces which they raised, it was simultaneously announced that strong recommendations would be made to Parliament in the next session to grant a proper compensation for such expenses, according to the active vigour and strenuous efforts of the respective provinces. A sum of £200,000 was accordingly voted by the British Parliament for this purpose in April 1759. Everywhere there was the same adaptation of means to ends. Foreign observers, who had put down the slowness and sluggishness of English methods to the system of government, now realised their mistake, and noted with astonishment the vigour and life everywhere apparent. It is perhaps the greatest tribute to Pitt's conduct of the colonial war that the one occasion on which a general appointed by him failed caused far-fetched reasons to be given for his appointment. Abercromby, whose failure in the ill-fated assault upon Ticonderoga was the one blot in the operations of 1758, was already second in command, and had hitherto borne an excellent reputation, so that his promotion was natural enough. Moreover, he seems loyally to have entered into the spirit of Pitt's policy, and writes with warm approval of Pownall's reforms as governor of Massachusetts. All the preparations for the Ticonderoga expedition appear to have been well planned, and received the approval of Pitt. Abercromby, upon his own responsibility, ignored Pitt's order to appoint Bradstreet to the office of deputy-quartermaster-general to Forbes for the expedition against Fort du Quesne. After the

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disaster at Ticonderoga, Abercromby allowed Bradstreet to proceed with three thousand five hundred men of his forces against Fort Frontenac, the capture of which prevented Fort du Quesne from being supplied with the necessary stores. Abercromby no doubt proved himself an indifferent general, and was rightly removed from the command; but it is not necessary to believe that Pitt in the heyday of his power deliberately appointed an inefficient general in the hope that his deficiencies might be made good by his brilliant subordinate, Lord Howe.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the series of well-known events which made good Pitt's boast to the Duke of Devonshire: 'I am sure that I can save this country and that nobody else can.' Whatever personal intrigues may have been at work, the colonists at least were fully convinced, in the words of Governor Dobbs of North Carolina, that Pitt had been restored to the execution of his trust by the united voice of the people of England. It was in no strain of conventional compliment that Forbes, the heroic leader of the expedition against Fort du Quesne, whose weakness obliged him to travel on a hurdle strung between two horses, wrote: 'I have used the freedom of giving your name to Fort du Quesne, as I hope it was in some measure the being actuated by your spirit that now makes us masters of the place'; or that Pownall, in sending his congratulations upon the fall of Quebec, added: 'We see the British Empire in America now established, and there are none who do not look up to the founder of it.'

The circumstances connected with Pitt's resignation in October 1761 are told with great fullness by Dr. von Ruville. Pitt had started his public life as one of the 'boy patriots' who had espoused the cause of Prince Frederick, and, though there had been vicissitudes in his relations with the Leicester House party, there was no reason why he should not be *persona grata* to George III., and his mentor Lord Bute. Pitt had been able by personal contact to conquer the prejudices of George II. His formal and elaborate manners were well adapted to a court, just as were those of Lord Beaconsfield.

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His first political faith had been the creed of Lord Bolingbroke with regard to a patriot king. According to that creed, the king and people were to coalesce over the dead body of the dethroned oligarchy. Pitt might well figure himself as the people's minister, the support and mainstay of the patriot king. George III. and Pitt were agreed in their dislike of the party system of government. No doubt the narrow-minded jealousy of George III. rendered impossible the attainment of such ideals. But, though Pitt was from the first made to feel that his sway was no longer undisputed, neither George III. nor Bute were desirous, so long as war lasted, of losing the services of the great war minister. Dr. von Ruville well brings out how Bute and Newcastle were endeavouring to overreach each other; but the general conclusion seems certain that Bute's real intention was to co-operate with Pitt, unless it should be necessary to resist him upon the question of peace. Newcastle was in favour of peace at almost any price; but, in the discussions in the cabinet, Bute was often found supporting Pitt against the former. In the critical meeting of the British cabinet in June, which, by insisting upon the exclusion of the French from the Newfoundland fishery, drove France into the arms of Spain, Bute voted with Pitt. So far from the popular view being correct that George III. and Bute together drove Pitt from power, the conclusion is forced upon us that, in the matter of his fall, Pitt was his own worst enemy. As late as August Newcastle found both the king and Bute disposed to give in to and to support Mr. Pitt in his warlike notions. When in September Pitt threatened to resign, unless Stanley was recalled from Paris, the ministry at once yielded. We find Newcastle writing to the Duke of Bedford that Pitt would for many reasons be glad of an excuse to send in his resignation. Considering all this, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that, if Pitt had shown a more conciliatory disposition towards his colleagues, he might even in October have obtained his way. The point on which Pitt and his colleagues came to issue was respecting the line

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to be taken towards Spain. It was common ground that Spain was intriguing against Great Britain, the sole question was whether Great Britain should forestall her in going to war. Pitt's behaviour was indeed so peremptory that Dr. von Ruville is almost inclined to hold that he may have been actuated in his resignation by a desire to give his colleagues, who were less implicated in his arrangements with Frederick, a free hand in securing an independent peace. But such a view is altogether inconsistent with Pitt's character. It seems more probable that the strain upon his nerves caused by his frequent attacks of gout was already producing results upon his general behaviour. In the fine panegyric of him, which is almost certainly by Burke, in the *Annual Register* for 1761, the words are added: 'Happy it had been for him, for his sovereign and his country, if a temper less austere and a disposition more practicable, more compliant and conciliating, had been joined to his other great virtues. The want of these qualities disabled him from acting any otherwise than alone: it prevented our enjoying the joint fruit of the wisdom of many able men, who might mutually have tempered and mutually forwarded each other; and finally, which was not the meanest loss, it deprived us of his own immediate services.' In the circles in which Burke moved there was no love lost towards the new Tory influences, and had there been truth in the popular legend, it would doubtless have found expression in his pages. The evidence of Newcastle may be suspect as that of an enemy, but Hardwicke was by no means naturally opposed to Pitt's policy, and may be taken as an impartial witness; but the extracts from the Hardwicke Papers, published in the *English Historical Review* for April 1906, show the feelings which Pitt excited in his colleagues. Hardwicke notes, after recording Pitt's words at the cabinet council of August 14, 1761: 'I won't take a *cobbled draft* upon alterations proposed by any person whatsoever.' 'Such insolence in the manner was scarce to be borne.' Again, at the last meeting of the cabinet which Pitt attended, it was the manner more than

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the matter of his utterances which seems to have shocked Hardwicke. His words, 'I will be responsible for nothing that I do not direct,' appeared to Hardwicke 'the most insolent declaration ever made by minister.' Dr. von Ruville has shown that even Pitt's resignation involved no breach with the king. In the letter in which he announced his resignation he was careful not to reject in advance any manifestations of the royal favour. The attitude of opposition, which he was made to assume, for a time, by the maladroit interference of his friends, was undoubtedly repugnant to his general line of conduct. Even when Pitt severely criticised the terms of the Treaty of Paris, he did not thereby of necessity break with the king. Dr. von Ruville writes that 'consideration of purely material interests, his hope of a considerable inheritance (from Sir William Pynsent), prevented Pitt from seizing the rudder of the state at the right moment (in 1763) and guiding the country in the American question.' Happily this statement rests on mere surmise, as otherwise our conception of Pitt would need profound modification. There is nothing, I am convinced, in the tangled labyrinth of negotiations, as shown by Dr. von Ruville, to necessitate so brutal a clue to the mystery. May not the simple solution be that Pitt realised that he must return to power as first minister or not at all? In 1763 the king was not willing to accept his terms; and in 1765, when the king had at last expressed his desire of constituting 'an administration of which Mr. Pitt was to be the head . . . and which might give satisfaction to his people,' the defection of Temple prevented Pitt from possessing the necessary parliamentary strength. The Rockingham ministry was, in a time of coalition ministries, the single example of a government formed from one compact, though not numerous, party. As such, it was not to Pitt's mind, though he was agreed with its American policy. To us, looking back with full knowledge of the importance of the events happening in America, and with the further knowledge of the irreconcilable positions taken up by George III. and Pitt, it seems almost

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incredible that in 1766 the king should have been willing to entrust Pitt with the formation of a ministry. But, at the time, the full importance of the events which were happening across the Atlantic was realised by none, and Englishmen of all parties were of opinion that the repeal of the Stamp Act had dismissed a troublesome question from the field of politics. In his dislike of domination by a Whig oligarchy George was willing to fly to the arms of the man who had said: 'I rejoice that America has resisted . . . and if ever this nation should have a tyrant for its king, six millions of freemen, so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would be fit instruments to make slaves of the rest.' The king was drawn to Pitt because he believed that he would give his aid towards destroying all party distinctions and restoring that subordination to government which could alone preserve liberty from degenerating into licence.

Did not the contemporary testimony stare us in the face, it would be difficult to credit the excitement over Pitt's elevation to the peerage. It is true that Pitt's strength had been with the middle classes of the city of London, and that they at first resented his acceptance of a peerage. He had been termed the 'Great Commoner'; but in fact he had been the great leader of the British nation. At the time the House of Commons was hardly more representative of the people than was the Upper Chamber. Pitt had never behind him a compact parliamentary majority. He was not interested in the details of legislation; and, for his purposes, he might have been as powerful for good in the Upper House as in the popular Assembly. Moreover, the state of his health made it necessary that he should accept an office such as the Privy Seal, which would free him from the details of official life. On no single occasion was it shown that Chatham's position was weakened by his transfer to the House of Lords. It was his absence from the direction of affairs which caused the mischief. It must be remembered that prime ministers, as we now understand them, were hardly known at this time,

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Ministries were for the most part partnerships, in which power and responsibility were pretty evenly divided. In the new ministry Chatham occupied a far more dominant position than had been the practice of preceding first ministers. Such being the case, and the ministry being (according to the creed of the king and of Pitt) formed with no regard to party ties, it is obvious how indispensable was the presence of the guiding hand. Dr. von Ruville seems to suggest that Pitt's final retirement and virtual abdication did not take place till he had endeavoured to throw on the opposition the responsibility for the American measures of his own chancellor of the exchequer. But if it is admitted, as Dr. von Ruville admits, though somewhat grudgingly, that Pitt's illness was genuine, there is no need for such far-fetched theories. Had Pitt been in good health and in his right mind, he would assuredly have insisted upon the resignation of Charles Townshend in the March of 1767. The opinion of Sir Andrew Clark, given to Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, is more suggestive than any words of a lay critic: 'Suppressed gout disordered the whole nervous system and drove him into a state of mental depression varying with excitement and equivalent to insanity.' Could a more tragic situation be imagined than that such should have been the condition of England's prime minister in the hour of her greatest need?

We must admit the truth of all that can be said regarding the dangers which accrued from the ministry, which lost America, remaining for two years under the shelter of the name of Chatham. Undoubtedly, when at last he was in opposition, his preceding conduct robbed him of something of his influence. We need not certainly blame him because he failed to evolve a system of imperial federation. In our own time, although the question has been approached by men willing and even anxious to find a solution, the problem of reconciling diversity of interests with the strength of unity has hitherto baffled statesmanship. It is enough for us that, in a material age, Pitt was one of the few who recognised that

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in the case of a body like the British Empire it was only a spirit in common which could preserve its life.

Pitt's colonial and foreign policy may have been a torso broken by the breakdown of his health. There is, however, ample evidence to show that in foreign affairs years after his disappearance from power even the name of Pitt was still powerful to protect the interests of his country. As late as 1775 Vergennes wrote in alarm lest, in consequence of the troubles in America, the terrible Chatham should return to power. However much Pitt's friends might talk of his love of peace, Vergennes preferred that its maintenance should rest in other hands. The French were at the time anxious that Great Britain should make concessions which would satisfy the colonies; because otherwise the British ministry would fall to pieces, and the king, in spite of his prejudices, might be forced to summon Chatham. He would return with absolute power. Other projects would present themselves to his genius, so as to divert the public mind from intestine quarrels. The forces prepared to coerce the colonies, acting in conjunction with the colonial militia, would be a naked sword in the hands of a madman. The French fishermen, who formed the *élite* of their sailors, assembled at Newfoundland, and French commerce on the seas would be at the mercy of the English. The French ambassador, de Guines, wrote to the same effect from London: 'Lord Chatham and his party have stirred up the Americans. The duty on tea was only a pretext. They have them in their hands. If they rally to their party all in England who cannot live without America, Lord Chatham will become the necessary peacemaker, and this is what we have to fear.' Humiliating concessions to the colonists might be atoned by conquests from the French. The king's intentions were no doubt very peaceful, but his hands might be forced. Even when the French began to realise that the revolt must in the end succeed, they were haunted with the idea that the two combatants might at any moment join hands against their hereditary foe. A strong argument used by those who advo-

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cated open support of the Americans was that by this means alone could this danger be averted. 'If the opposition,' wrote Beaumarchais in the spring of 1776, 'gains the day and is able to conclude a treaty of reunion with the colonies, the Americans, indignant with us for being, through our refusal to help, the cause of their defeat, will forthwith, by joining forces with England, menace our West India Islands.' With what joy would a ministry composed of Chatham and his followers adopt the view of the Americans, and wage a relentless war against France. Even as late as December 1777 the Spanish ministry were afraid of a return of Lord Chatham to power and of an organised movement against the House of Bourbon. It was this consideration, as well as fear of the precedent of colonial emancipation, which held Spain back from coalescing with France.[1] It must always remain one of the unsolved problems of history how far during these fatal years, had Pitt been restored to power, with two years of health, he might have prevailed to reconcile the estranged colonies, and direct the united energies of England and America against France. In any case it was most fitting that his last public utterance should have been an impassioned appeal for imperial patriotism: 'I rejoice that the grave has not closed upon me, that I am still alive to lift my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy. . . . Shall this great kingdom now fall prostrate before the House of Bourbon? . . . Any state is better than despair. Let us at least make an effort; and if we must fall, let us fall like men.'

The king's action in refusing ever again to admit Chatham as prime minister has been the subject of severe censure, even by moderate men; but, on the other hand, it must be remembered how strange and unaccountable had been his behaviour during the years 1766 to 1768. It is possible that some instinct in the king, who was himself for so many years to be the victim of madness, recoiled from something in Chatham which was hardly reconcilable with sanity.

[1] The letters are printed in *Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique*. Par H. Doniol. Paris, 1886-92.

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Those who are not ashamed still to confess themselves hero-worshippers, and believe that Pitt, with all his failings, was one of the most heroic men in English history, may point to the language of his colleague the Duke of Grafton. Grafton was neither a wise statesman nor a strong man, but he was by no means a fool, and he knew Chatham intimately, and this is his verdict: 'His views were great and noble, worthy of a patriot; but they were too visionary.' The organiser of victory was also the seer of visions, the dreamer of dreams. We need not agree with Mr. Frederic Harrison that the years of opposition were of more value to mankind than the short time during which he created a new empire. None the less may we recognise in his views on reform, on India—some will add on Ireland—'the trumpet of a prophecy.'

We need not expect to find in his eloquence the material for a systematic political philosophy. That political philosophy may seem somewhat obsolete to the latter-day inquirer. Based largely on Magna Charta, the declaration of rights, and Locke's social compact, much of it is dead and buried. The elaborate argumentation on the distinction between taxation and general legislative powers may belong to the limbo of the past. In fiscal matters Chatham may have been the mere advocate of mercantilism, and thus done violence to his view of imperial equality. But just as we saw that men recognised that the man was greater than his speeches, so was he greater than his opinions.

The subject of the first William Pitt must always possess fascination, and the English and American reader will be very grateful to Dr. von Ruville for the patient research and inexhaustible learning with which he has pursued the career of the Great Commoner. We may differ from some of his conclusions. None the less may we rejoice over this new and solid contribution to world-history.

HUGH E. EGERTON.

July 1907.

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PREFACE

A QUESTION connected with the Seven Years' War—the question how King Frederick in the last year of this war lost the help of England, his only ally[1]—first directed my attention to the English history of this period. My honoured tutor at that time, Professor Dr. Koser, now general director of the Prussian state archives, advised me to take up the study of this subject, and I avail myself of this opportunity to express once again my warmest thanks for his kindness. In the course of my investigations I realised the important influence exerted by the Anglo-French colonial war over the struggles upon German soil. A more extended range of observation presented King Frederick's heroic struggle as the centre of a storm raging in every clime. I thus conceived the idea of writing a connected account of these outlying conflicts by way of completion to the existing narratives of the German war. However, I recognised at the outset that the sources of information at my disposal would not enable me to make any material addition to our present knowledge of the military history of the period; indeed, of the events of first-rate importance full narratives already existed; on the other hand, there was clearly room for a work illustrating and determining the true inward connection between these events and the action of the directing governmental forces, and such a work was possible with the materials at my command. Then came before my gaze the brilliant figure of the man whose strong hand grasped the reins of power

[1] *Die Auflösung des preussisch-englischen Bündnisses im Jahre* 1762. Berl. Diss. Berlin, 1892.

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in England in the years of crisis to achieve full measure of success. While I was writing this first work, I had discovered a lively interest in William Pitt, which then led me to devote a special treatise to an important episode in his life.[1] I then resolved to attempt a biography of the famous statesman, based upon a wider knowledge of the original authorities and sources of information: such a biography would fulfil the main object of the work I had at first designed, and would enable me to turn my preliminary researches to full account. I was further confirmed in my intention by the fact that the existing material had not as yet received that treatment which modern historical science demands.

It seemed that a biography of Pitt should throw light upon the connection between the military, diplomatic, and domestic events of the period, and disclose the entire policy of the most successful military power; but beyond this, it should also provide information upon a manifold series of events far beyond the limits of the Seven Years' War. It should largely contribute to a correct appreciation of the wars antecedent and subsequent to that struggle, in particular the wars of the Austrian Succession and of American Independence: it should at the same time provide a view of social life and domestic policy, of the habits of mind, the ideas, and the manners of Englishmen, as developed in the middle of the eighteenth century. Research into the details of a man's life and into the engineering of a family connection of political importance could not but be productive of interesting results. Pitt's career had also a further attraction for the historian, by reason of the many unsolved and difficult problems which it presented as material for the spirit of historical research.

Here, then, is published in three volumes the work which these considerations have inspired, and it remains for the public to decide whether and to what extent the possibilities above noted have been realised. Many a reader may rise

[1] *William Pitt (Chatham) and Graf Bute.* Berlin, 1895.

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from the perusal of this book with the impression that my hero has not received his due meed of praise, and that my judgments of his conduct have been at times unduly severe. I cannot deny that my methods of portraiture do not always display him in the favourable light in which he has hitherto appeared to a grateful posterity—many an ornament, for which there was no justification, has been removed. But I believe my portrait to be accurate on the whole. Existing frailties have not been painted out, but any grounds of excuse which presented themselves are always added, while full value has been given to high qualities. Similarly I think I have duly emphasised the capacities of the English nation, and the excellences of their institutions, without concealment of the deficiencies which these institutions involve.

My sincerest thanks are due to the authorities of the royal state archives in Berlin for the readiness with which they have placed their treasures at my disposal, and in particular to Herr Geheimrat Hegern for his kindly assistance. I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my warmest thanks to the authorities of the Public Record Office of Great Britain and of the British Museum for the readiness with which they have facilitated my researches. I have also to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to Mr. Hubert Hall, the well-known historian, and President of the Royal Historical Society, for the manifold help and the admirable advice which he gave me during my numerous visits to London.

My work will, I hope, be of interest not only to English and German, but also to French and American readers, inasmuch as it deals at considerable length with the mutual relations of these nations at a period of most critical importance for each one of them. For England William Pitt was an empire-builder, an historical personality of first-rate importance; a personality, again, of no less importance to Germany for his influence upon the issue of her fiercest civil war; to America he is a highly interesting character, closely connected with the rise of the American body politic; while

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to France he is the dangerous foe who inflicted heavy loss upon her in the hour of her weakness, but whose very triumphs contributed to bring about the greatest transformation and the most vigorous impulse to progress that France has known.

ALBERT VON RUVILLE.

NOTE

The references to Pitt's correspondence with colonial governors and military and naval commissioners in America, references to which in the text are given from Thackeray's Life of Chatham, *will be easily found under the respective dates in the two volumes of such correspondence edited by Gertrude S. Kimball. London and New York,* 1906.

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ERRATA

Page 56, line 22, *for* 'sister' *read* 'sisters.'
Page 56, lines 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, *for* 'her' *read* 'their.'
Page 56, line 26, *for* 'aunt' *read* 'aunts.'
Page 56, line 27, *for* 'she' *read* 'they.'
Page 56, line 28, *for* 'her' *read* 'them.'
Page 75, line 33, 'The fourth daughter, whose Christian name is unknown to me.' The lady's name was Maria. Authority, Collins's *Peerage*, vol. vi. p. 50, ed. 1768.
Page 106, line 39, *for* 'George II.' *read* 'George I.'
Page 235, lines 29, 31, page 236, line 1, *for* 'Vincent' *read* 'John.'
Page 256, line 17, *for* 'secretaryship of war' *read* 'secretaryship at war.'
Page 259, line 23, page 271, line 5, *for* 'secretary of war' *read* 'secretary at war.'

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WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM

INTRODUCTION

The subject of our narrative rises amid the history of England as a rock, mighty and strong, not however opposing the course of development, or directing the stream of progress into new channels, a type of character often to be found in English history, but rather as a dominating landmark, weatherworn on either side by the nature of preceding and subsequent periods, and yet forming a self-contained and uniform whole. Such was the character of William Pitt the elder, as will be shown in detail in the course of the biography which I propose to write. This biography will further demonstrate the fact, that although no actual change of natural development was due to him, he yet contributed largely to the advance of the nation, and materially accelerated its progress. This constructive energy is not, however, apparent in this first period of his life, the period of his rise; what we shall observe here is the peculiar nature of his position midway between two epochs, and the special influence exerted thereby upon his character. For a correct understanding and appreciation of these facts a general view of the stage of development attained by the English state at that period is indispensable. We require an account of the region in which our landmark is situated.

The opinion is widely and generally entertained, that the English state is the purest form of constitutional government, and that it was impressed with this form at a very early date. While other states were labouring under great uncertainty or entire confusion of constitutional form, or were burdened by the weight of despotism, England is supposed to have secured a careful delimitation of spheres of influence and

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a balance of power between co-existing forces: while in other parts of the world the central government extended its creative, guiding, and regulating powers over every department of national life, upon English soil, we are told, corporate freedom and the power of self-government had arisen and formed a basis for the foundation of the Parliament, the second factor of the sovereign power.

It may, indeed, be correctly asserted that in England rights were painfully and sedulously preserved even in political life, and that constitutional right has been carefully developed by due regard for law and precedent. But this process was invariably conditioned and predetermined by the necessity of avoiding any possible detriment to the material interests of the power then in force or likely to be in force. A conflict upon this point often resulted in outrage upon public right, though detriment thus inflicted was naturally glozed over, so far as this was possible. Nor was the monarchy alone guilty in this respect, while its absolute power was unimpaired: equally guilty was the Parliament, especially the House of Commons, the history of which is full of acts of self-aggrandizement. I cannot think that things were greatly different in other countries, least of all in Germany. In Germany the constitution was developed with care, and right was maintained, provided that the material interests of the sovereign were not thereby impaired. Even the much-abused *Reichshofrat* was anxious to uphold constitutional right, so far as this was consistent with the maintenance of the imperial power. It cannot be said that England, in this respect, was in any way in advance, although her political situation was in many respects far more favourable. Again, the assertion is correct that self-government in England had been admirably developed. But was that not also the case in old-time Germany in her districts, towns, and territories? Conditions in England were better, not because a greater measure of freedom was opposed to the governing powers, but, on the contrary, for the reason that the opposition was less and that the government was able to interfere, to regulate, and to stop degeneration: the government had a firm grip of the actual power, which in the case of Germany was unduly subdivided among the component members of the empire. For when the governmental power increased in Germany, the component

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members lost not only their self-supremacy, but also their right of administration, with the consequence that a healthy system of self-government was for the most part ruined by an illegitimate spirit of separatism.

Utterly false is the opinion that there was at any time in England an equilibrium of different forces with constitutional right above them as a final court of appeal. Such is, indeed, the general idea of a constitutional state. Montesquieu's work upon the English constitution was a distorted picture, as every one knows; no sharp distinction has been made between the executive and legislative functions, nor have these been assigned to separate powers; the judicial function is not a power, so long as it preserves its true character. Supreme power is not exercised by law, dead letter, or tradition, but by those who have the right to make laws, to recognise, to enforce, and to alter them. To regard a constitution as something above and beyond the human administration of it, is to adopt a fictitious point of view: a constitution can, at most, be considered as the established basis of action which is used by successive generations until some advisable reason for change appears. To say this is by no means to assert the necessity of absolutism. The action of the ruling power can be conditioned by that of the subordinate factors, whose wishes and whose will must be taken into consideration, and this process may go so far as eventually to paralyse the ruling power: at the same time the will of this latter can alone be regarded as the will of the state. An event, however, of possible and of constant occurrence is the transference of sovereignty from one factor to the other, not as the result of legislation, but in consequence of a change in national feeling; this has happened in England, though the fact cannot be demonstrated upon strict constitutional principles. Moreover, the conflicts which accompanied this process involved considerably more than the mere right of constitutional precedence. Here, as upon the Continent, it was the struggle for absolute power which gave rise to the whole disturbance.

In the seventeenth century appears a strong and general tendency towards absolutism, a desire to reduce the power of the aristocracy, which had gained an excessive and often a pernicious influence in the course of the preceding age. In Germany the imperial power attempted to secure predomin-

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ance by a process of conflict and intrigue, but was unable to defeat the powers of territorial princedom, which established absolutism in many provinces. In France the nobility were defeated and overshadowed by the unlimited power of the Bourbons. In Denmark, about 1665, was issued the famous royal decree, assigning the entire administrative power to the monarch, and in Sweden the parliament was subjected to the royal will about 1693. In England, too, a similar tendency was strongly apparent, but the results to which it led were very different.

The Tudors, who enjoyed the advantages of high personal prestige and compliant Parliaments, had readily observed the forms of the constitution: the Stuarts, though lower in the favour of the nation, followed the tendency of the period and exceeded the action of their predecessors. They made no secret of their leanings to absolutism, and aroused the opposition of a Parliament accustomed to consideration and conscious of its strength, of the representatives of a powerful nobility, and of a middle-class that had grown wealthy and prosperous. After long preliminary skirmishes open war broke out between the two powers. The special characteristic of the struggle lies in the fact that the absolutist tendency of the age, against which the war was waged, made itself felt even in the parliamentary camp. In proportion as the conflict proceeded, so did the leaders forget their real object, the maintenance of the old rights and privileges, in their zeal to secure absolute supremacy for themselves. This object was not the limitation of the monarchy by constitutional means: Stuart perfidy promised no permanence for such limitations. Nor again was popular control the object, for every general election might bring new leaders to the front. The struggle was waged to secure the absolute power of the men who were for the moment at the head of affairs. The edict of 1641, which made the dissolution of the House of Commons conditional upon its own consent, was intended to subserve this purpose. The consequence was to destroy the connection between the nation and the House of Commons. The disregard of the latter for the wishes of the House of Lords gave it the position of an oligarchical power struggling with the king for the possession of the throne. It was not, however, to this oligarchy that supremacy ultimately fell, but to those whose right it was, the

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Puritan army and its general, whose efforts had secured the victory. From these turmoils emerged an absolutism of far severer form than the Stuarts had ever desired, with the sole difference that another hand wielded the supreme power. Hence this conflict was not a struggle for freedom and justice between prince and people, but, in correspondence with the ideas of the age, a struggle between rival despots for precedence. As soon as the nation had realised this fact, it naturally turned to the dynastic ruler, in spite of all the absolutist tendencies of the dynasty, which was accordingly recalled, so soon as circumstances permitted.

The second struggle, the so-called glorious Revolution of 1688, was materially different in character. In this case the questions at stake were the maintenance of actual privileges, security against monarchical aggression, against the re-introduction of Roman Catholicism, against arbitrary taxation, partiality in the administration of justice, and so forth. To secure these ends, James II. was deposed by the consent of the two great parties, the Whigs and Tories, who united for the purpose. The Declaration of Right expressed their wishes. The utmost that the Tories would concede was the enthronement of a righteous in place of an unrighteous king, and of a Protestant in place of a Catholic; their secret wishes were ever concentrated upon the restoration of the legitimate dynasty, whereas the Whigs regarded the revolution as only the first step upon the path towards their own supremacy. The illegitimate dynasty appointed by the Parliament naturally relapsed into dependence upon the Parliament which had declared itself to be the real sovereign power. However, the composition of the Parliament was such that commercial and economic superiority could assert itself unchecked. The classes in the towns and in the country which had risen to wealth and prosperity exerted a steadily increasing influence upon the elections, for these invariably demanded a considerable outlay of capital. Many seats were marketable properties for the reason that their occupancy depended upon the possession of certain lands or estates, and among the free electorate corruption was rapidly advancing. The wealth of the country, its trade and manufactures, and the landed property, were for the most part in the hands of the Whigs: hence, though a Tory majority was always probable, the Whigs could flatter

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themselves that the subordination of the king to the Parliament provided at least a prospect for the foundation of their own future predominance. Thus the Revolution of 1688 was not primarily actuated by a desire to secure either constitutional rights or an equilibrium of diverse forces. The Tories continued to uphold the principle of the divine right of kings and the almost absolute power of the king, and naturally hoped, as the defenders of the principle, to participate in its advantages. The foreign king of an alien dynasty was to them a temporary expedient, undesirable but unavoidable. On the other hand, the Whigs aimed at securing the absolute supremacy for themselves by means of the Parliament, which was now definitely acknowledged as the deciding power. Once again this conflict appears as a struggle for precedence between rival powers, between monarchy and a plutocracy, though modified by the special fact that the legitimate representative of the monarchy had quarrelled with his own supporters, and had been overthrown by his own adherents. This overthrow did not imply the defeat of the monarchical principle, for the monarchical army, the Tory party, remained intact: indeed, it was not until the Revolution had been accomplished that the actual struggle began. But this event had conferred an immense advantage upon the Whigs: in the first place, the Tories had been forced to concede supreme rights to the Parliament, though they might themselves benefit by these; and secondly, the Tories were divided upon the question who was to be regarded as the true wearer of the crown. Upon the fall of James II. the party had been broken by irremediable dissensions, which prevented any coherent or continuous policy, and proved an obstacle to real and permanent confidence between themselves and the new king. Continuity of policy could be predicted only of those Tories who professed Jacobitism: they were but few in number, and the behaviour of the Stuarts was calculated steadily to thin their ranks. The remainder halted in indecision, clinging to their royalist principles, and regarded by the monarchs of the new dynasty as a party of value for the immediate purposes of government, but not as a support of any permanence.

Thus, even in an age when despotism was crushed, the Whigs, in spite of their smaller numbers, were able to hold their own with the Tories and upon occasion to come into

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power. Had the Tories been in close federation with the king, the Whigs would have been defeated, in spite of the fact that the Parliament had become the deciding power, for the Crown possessed great influence in the Parliament: but as it was, the sovereign treated Whigs and Tories alike, and the former were as competent as the latter to undertake the guidance of the state. The economic superiority of the Whigs almost counterbalanced the numerical superiority of the Tories.

The Whigs were, however, destined to rise yet higher, and to secure an actual and permanent predominance. They had one great advantage: not only had the main branch of the Stuart dynasty destroyed all prospect of their restoration by their adherence to Roman Catholicism and their alliance with foreign powers, but also no indirect line of descent existed to which the nation, who were royalist at heart, might have transferred their allegiance. Hence the necessity for securing the succession to the entirely alien dynasty of the House of Hanover, whose connection with the Stuarts was practically inappreciable. Had the Tories realised this necessity from the outset, and resolutely supported the Act of Settlement, had they then shown decision in continuing this attitude, they need have suffered no disadvantage from the change of dynasty. As royalists they might have supported the Hanoverians as they had supported the Stuarts, and the new dynasty would never have spurned allies of such value to itself in any struggle for crown prerogatives. But party principles were too strong to permit the adoption of a consistent policy in this direction. If the party was divided upon the question of a legitimate or a semi-legitimate dynasty, it was infinitely more divided upon the question of a legitimate or an illegitimate dynasty. In the latter case the inclination to choose the alternative of legitimacy was far stronger, and yet insufficiently strong to induce the whole party to fight for their principle. The result, which might easily have been foreseen, was the defeat of 1714 which destroyed Tory prestige, and long deprived the party of all prospect of governmental power. As every one knows, the kings went over to the standard of the Whigs, to whom they owed the throne, and, without regard to the traditional dignity of the monarchy, proceeded to recognise the predominance of Parliament; the influence of the Crown,

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by no means unimportant, was placed at the disposal of their Whig allies, whose supremacy was thereby definitely assured.

The confusion which prevailed from 1688 to 1714 forms a closer parallel to the turmoils in the reign of Charles I. than is provided by the isolated occurrence of 1688-9; in either case the result was to secure, not constitutional right or an equilibrium of opposing forces, but the predominance of a group of individuals. In the one case it was the Puritan army, in the other it was the Whig nobility, that gained the victory, and with it the leadership. In the former case the consequence was a military, in the latter a plutocratic supremacy. In either case the means employed to secure success were the popular ideas of freedom and of national control and the Parliament. Either party succeeded in bending to its will the Parliament which it had aggrandized: and this was a process carried out in accordance with the respective characters of the two parties: the Puritan army employed the forcible method of expelling disagreeable members of Parliament and abolishing the Upper House, the Whigs used the gentler and far more demoralising methods of bribery and corruption. But in either case the victorious party was far too unwieldy to undertake in person the task of administration. The parties were bound in turn to become a pedestal for the elevation of some actual ruler, and in either case a personality able to make full use of the advantages of this position was forthcoming. Oliver Cromwell, the victorious general, became the incarnation of the military supremacy, while plutocracy found its representative in Robert Walpole, the adroit financier.[1] Both were admirable rulers: the taint of illegality which clung to them was derived only from the mode of their appointment, though they were exposed in consequence to fierce attacks from every other aspirant to place and power. The period when this plutocratic ruler, if we may venture so to call a constitutional appointment, reached the zenith of his power, was the time at which we shall see our hero make his entry upon the political stage.

Such was the governmental system which had been developed from the Revolution of 1688. It was a system

[1] George I. said of him that he could change stones into gold. Mahon, *History of England*, ii. 123 (Tauchnitz Edition).

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enjoying important advantages in comparison with the constitutions of other states at that time. To begin with, a body of political rights had been defined, for the most part, with clear and precise limitations. The question whether the sovereign power rested with the king or with the Parliament had been decided in favour of the latter, if not irrevocably, at any rate for a long time to come. The fact was no longer disputed that the Parliament formed the centre of gravity of the whole constitutional fabric. No rival power existed to call for any compromise on points of privilege. Even doubtful cases of royal prerogative were decided by reference to the representatives of the nation. Struggles of a violent character might arise between parties and individual statesmen to secure a majority and with it the power of government; but further conflict regarding the form of the constitution was impossible: such a conflict indeed, in view of the absence of any final court of appeal, could only have been decided by brute force. The will of the Parliament, whatever the influences that brought it to expression, could always be clearly and definitely ascertained, and was finally decisive.

The Parliament, again, however dependent it might be upon those in power, was an admirable working instrument for their use. It was able to initiate beneficial legislation, for its members were informed upon the needs and the local circumstances of every part of the kingdom: it exercised a control of administration by no means distasteful to the administrators for the time being; it secured strict order in financial business, though on questions of impost and taxation it was subject to the will of the party in power. The work of administration had not become any less expensive after the fall of the Stuarts; expense had, indeed, increased: but uncertain and arbitrary taxation was now a thing of the past, and the result was that rapid increase of credit which gave England her great advantage over the other states of that period. Further, while the party or the individual in power was able to pursue a line of policy without interference, there was absolutely no question of a despotism. An administrator could not afford to disregard the criticism of the opposition: if criticism was well founded or too constantly incurred, a storm of resentment might be raised in the hearts of the

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nation which not even the corrupt Parliament of the age could withstand. The broader surface offered by this corporation, however great its solidarity, was more sensitive to the breath of national displeasure than the tall mast to which we may liken an absolute ruler supported by his own power.

The third advantage conferred by this system was the maintenance of self-government in the counties and parishes. Such independence and autocracy as was unfortunately acquired by the German provinces of this time was entirely out of the question, but the parishes remained undisturbed in the administration of their own local affairs, provided that their action did not conflict with the interests of the whole body politic or of the ruling party: by this means the national capacity for political action was increased, and became strongly apparent both in the Parliament and in new constitutional foundations planted overseas.

Here we may conclude our sketch of the internal conditions of constitutional life: these were naturally in close connection with foreign affairs, and before attacking the actual subject of this book, a few words must be devoted to foreign relations, though much of this subject will be reserved for later treatment.

To form a correct appreciation of the relations of England with other countries we must always be careful to remember that England at this time, even leaving her colonies out of the question, was very far beneath the high prestige, the population, and the wealth which she now possesses. In comparison with such great continental powers as Spain, France, or even the German empire, England was a rising and a vigorous, but at the same time a small state, which had obtained abnormal influence only by commercial and mercantile alertness, by a well-ordered financial system, and by means of a well-equipped fleet. To the middle of the eighteenth century the population did not exceed six millions, and was under nine millions, even including Scotland and Ireland. France, on the other hand, had a population of about twenty-one millions, while that slumbering giant, the German empire, had nearly forty millions. National prosperity, again, was little in advance of that of France, although the latter had suffered greatly under the latter years of the reign

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of Louis XIV. The national revenue, at least, corresponded approximately to the relative number of the population: in England it was little more than five millions of pounds, while in France the revenue amounted to nearly twenty-two millions. At an earlier period the difference between the two countries had been even more pronounced, for England in virtue of her colonial position advanced more rapidly; hence the mediæval wars between the two states are not to be regarded as a conflict of two equal powers. At that time a party struggle was proceeding on French soil, and England formed the auxiliary power and the financial support of that party whose leader was the English Crown. Had this party become definitely triumphant, and had the king of England secured the crown of France, France could not have been bound to England, but would have assumed the position of mother-country with England united to her as a colony.

Apprehension of the projects of this powerful neighbour was the determining motive of English policy. The maritime and continental expansion to which France had attained during the early years of Louis XIV., and the dangerous enterprises upon which this king had embarked, were a heavy weight upon English minds. If her exhaustion were overcome, there was nothing to prevent France from resuming these projects: she might seize the coast of the Netherlands, attempt an invasion with an overwhelming force, surround and crush the colonies in America. It was by no means impossible for France to create a powerful fleet, if her interests seemed to demand this force. The provision of money, of officers and men, was no obstacle to so rich, so populous, and so warlike a state. The allied powers were, therefore, forced into coherent action for the purpose of developing their colonial possessions and securing the maintenance of a superior maritime force.

The most valuable ally was Austria, together with those German states accessible to her influence; of these the most important was that highly capable military power, Brandenburg-Prussia. The Prussian arms had formed the chief obstacle to the advance of Louis. England had every interest in securing the solidarity of the German empire and the predominance of Austria, for Germany was the natural opponent of French advance to the East, and therefore a

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[illegible] at the same time, to judge from previous [illegible] the likelihood of German rivalry by sea was [illegible]. The good relations were in general maintained with Germany, in consequence of the traditional [illegible] between Hapsburg and Bourbon, a possible cessation of which was not entirely out of calculation.

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possible ally, while at the same time, to judge from previous experience, the likelihood of German rivalry by sea was inappreciable. Thus good relations were in general maintained with Germany, in consequence of the traditional hostility between Hapsburg and Bourbon, a possible cessation of which was left entirely out of calculation.

Apart from France, Spain might also be considered a possible, though not necessarily a probable, opponent, for collision with Spain was not difficult. Assault and loss were to be feared from France, and in this direction even England's offensive action partook of the nature of defence, such action being undertaken to anticipate possible damage: towards Spain, however, the attitude of England was primarily aggressive. Since the age of discovery England had felt an increasing need of opportunity for the favourable distribution of her manufactured goods in countries overseas in return for raw material, colonial products, and money. Her commercial relations with her own American colonies were not particularly productive, for these in spite of every limitation either produced their own supplies or imported them from elsewhere. Nor again could the American colonies provide every kind of import for which a demand existed. The East India Company had a monopoly of the Indian trade. But the vast and wealthy districts of Southern and Central America provided an admirable and highly productive market, which the Spaniards themselves had turned to very small account. Every year one fleet left Seville for Puerto Bello, on the Isthmus of Panama, and another sailed to Vera Cruz, in Mexico, where the exchange of wares took place. Every other ship was obliged to obtain special permission to trade, which could only be secured with considerable difficulty. The natural result was the development of a vigorous smuggling trade carried on from the English and the Dutch islands in the West Indies, which received every assistance from the Spanish colonists, and even from the authorities. The English and Dutch sold their wares cheaper and paid better prices than the Spaniards for what they bought. Moreover, the English were able to exploit the rich supply of valuable woods existing on the uninhabited coasts, especially on the peninsula of Yucatan. Settlements sprang up for handling cargoes of logwood, and the founders were naturally dis-

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inclined to surrender these upon demand, although the Spanish ownership of the district was recognised. Such behaviour on the part of the English might easily become a *casus belli*; in fact, it was to deal with these questions that Pitt was obliged to form a policy during the first period of his public career.

At this point it remains for us to glance at the English colonial possessions, which became of steadily increasing importance to the mother-country during the period with which we have to deal. Pitt's interests and his labours were largely concentrated upon the colonies during the greater part of his life, and in this department his chief successes were gained. Here, too, his immediate predecessors had been active.

The colonies owned by England in the seventeenth century were very unimportant in comparison with her present colonial empire; her most important colonies at that time were those which are no longer hers to-day. A number of flourishing settlements on the east coast of North America, a few West Indian islands, of which Jamaica was the largest, and two or three factories in India belonging to the East India Company: this was all. These possessions could not for a moment compare with the Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires, and were nearly the same in extent as the French and Dutch colonies. Future prospects of success were diminished by the fact that the English colonies showed but little inclination to obey the behests of the mother-country: they strove, and with partial success, to secure their independence, and to this endeavour they were the more inclined for the reason that their original population was largely composed of religious and political refugees. At every attempt to extend the American colonies the government was obliged to consider the means of crushing these aspirations to independence, while pursuing its primary object. Colonial enterprise was thus hampered, and harmonious co-operation became impossible.

The expansion of the English sphere of influence inland from the coast and English relations with the French colonies are reserved for later and more detailed treatment. Here we need only observe that before the middle of the eighteenth century the French had explored and occupied the mighty

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valleys of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi rivers, together with the intermediate lake district: upon their establishment here, they had laid claim to the whole of the Northern Continent with the exception of the Spanish districts and the English settlements upon the coast: in the peace of Utrecht their possessions had been defined by somewhat indeterminate lines of delimitation. Upon this occasion England secured the Acadian peninsula south of the mouth of the St. Lawrence, while from a certain degree of latitude northward Canada formed her southern boundary on the north of the continent, together with the deep inlet of Hudson's Bay. The French were henceforward in possession of the colony of Canada on the St. Lawrence and of the islands off the coast with the exception of Newfoundland: to them also belonged the colony of Louisiana at the mouth of the Mississippi, and a chain of posts with isolated settlements lying between these two positions. The area of these two colonies was conceived to extend far enough to touch the upper Mississippi and to embrace the whole of the western continent. The English, on the other hand, starting from the basis of their coast colonies, had gradually pushed their settlements beyond the Alleghany Mountains, and claimed the country to the west, on the ground that the original charters gave them the land from sea to sea. They were naturally striving to break through the surrounding barriers.

Such was the state of affairs in America. As regards India, there was practically no question of colonies in the proper sense of the term. Different European nations had secured rights of occupation at individual points upon the coast from the native chieftains, with the object of thence developing their trade with the interior: these points of settlement remained, however, under the supremacy and control of the princes, and in the last resort, under the control of the Grand Mogul of Delhi, by whom all permissions to settle were issued. In certain cases these settlements were also granted the right of erecting fortifications for defence against marauding raids. Hostilities between the settlers on Indian soil were almost entirely precluded by the fact that such action would damage their trade and bring down the interference of the authorities, which invariably proved somewhat expensive. In this way

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arose a group of settlements on the Hooghly river in Bengal, the English Hooghly, afterwards Calcutta, the French Chandernagore, the Dutch Cossimbuzar, and some others on the coast of Coromandel, Madras, Pondicherry, Negapatam, etc. The trading companies established in these districts manifested little or no inclination to acquire territory, in view of the expenses of administration and protection which such acquisitions would involve: the several settlements, therefore, quietly pursued their business, entirely satisfied if they were not disturbed in their occupation of money-making. The attempt of an English governor to begin a more comprehensive policy towards the close of the century had proved a dismal failure, and ended in his humiliation by the Grand Mogul. On the east the most important English settlements were Calcutta and Madras, with Port St. David, and on the west Bombay, where the administrative authorities were established after the factory of Surat had been given up. Hence a flourishing trade was carried on, not only with the interior, but also overseas, eastward as far as China and westward with Persia.

It was in India and in Madras that the family of the man with whose life we have to deal first rose to political prestige and material wealth. He himself exercised the most definite and prominent of all influences upon English colonial development. Thus our first chapter will lead us to those distant shores, on which we meet his parents.

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SECTION I

BIRTH AND CHARACTER-DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I

DIAMOND PITT

THE plutocratic character acquired by the English state about the time of the glorious Revolution of 1688-9, and the importance to which colonial commerce then rose, are clearly evidenced by the case of the Pitt family, which, though of no reputation and broken by many ramifications, was raised in a moment to political and social importance by one clever and fortunate colonial trader. Thomas Pitt, the grandfather of William Pitt the elder, occupies a central position in the history of the family: he was the penniless younger son of a poor family of landed gentry; he became the ancestor of several distinguished noble families, the members of which shared directly in the development of the state, and therefore the forefather of the two most famous English statesmen. There is no doubt that had it not been for him and his commercial success the condition of life prevalent in the England of that day would have left the Pitt family in their original obscurity, and that none of its members, however talented, would have been able to rise to the head of the state. It was not the case that the bequest of a large fortune to the grandson guaranteed him in the possession of the influence he required; as a matter of fact, William's share of his grandfather's wealth was no great amount: but the property of Thomas opened the doors of the ruling aristocracy to his children, enabled them to marry into the first families of the country, and provided them with connections which enormously facilitated, if they did not secure, their advancement in life.

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Thomas was thus a highly important member of his family. To him they may be said, in a sense, to have owed their position, and it may very well be the fact that he exercised a certain influence upon the family life and thought, and upon the energies and ambitions of individual members. His grandson, William, may have inherited much from him directly or indirectly, and a detailed study of the grandfather's career may contribute largely to our understanding of that process of development which the grandson underwent. Even differences and oppositions of character, where observed, may be capable of explanation as the result of reaction against the tendencies of the grandfather's character, and be therefore accountable upon a study of that character. In any case, a detailed account of Thomas Pitt's career is fully justified by the necessity of laying the broadest possible foundation for our study of William Pitt.

From an early date the Pitt family[1] had been resident in the fertile county of Dorsetshire, situated almost in the centre of the south coast of England. There a certain Nicholas Pitt, about 1545, in the reign of Henry VIII., had held estates in Blandford and Wimborne, on the lower reaches of the river Stour, which empties itself into the sea to the west of the Isle of Wight. This property cannot have been extensive, and a numerous posterity prevented its increase: but the eldest of the great-grandsons of Nicholas must have acquired some wealth and reputation, as he enjoyed the title of Sir William Pitt of Iwerne and Strathfieldsaye. Possibly an advantageous marriage brought about this result. However, the ancestor of our line was not this Sir William, but his youngest brother, Thomas Pitt of Blandford, who died about 1643. His sons, William and John, probably possessed no real estate worth mentioning, and gained their living by other occupations. We find the elder as mayor of the little town of Dorchester, and the younger brother as rector of the church of St. Mary at Blandford. To this latter and his wife, Sarah Jay, was born their eldest son, Thomas Pitt, the future Governor of Madras, on July 5, 1653.

[1] Cp. *The Diary of William Hedges*, ed. Henry Yule; London, 1889. Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, 78, vol. iii. p. 28 f.: the genealogy of the family is there given in full.

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The financial position of the junior clergy was by no means brilliant, and there were three other children in the family—a daughter, who afterwards married a clergyman, and two sons: Thomas could not therefore have inherited any great amount of property upon the death of the rector in 1672. In order to make his way in the world and to escape the restriction and the poverty of his home environment, he was bound to find some quicker means of money-making than agriculture or the official life of a country town could afford.

The most recent discussions upon this subject,[1] which are in the main derived from the same sources of information as this sketch, represent Thomas Pitt as an 'interloper' in East India, that is, as a trader conducting his business within the sphere of influence belonging to the East India Company and in defiance of their monopoly. How he got there and what his previous occupation had been are questions of which no solution has been attempted owing to lack of material. The Company is supposed to have prosecuted him from 1675 as an interloper, carrying on his business in Bengal. A more thorough examination of the documentary evidence of the diary has led me to the conviction that more remains to be said about his early years, and that existing conclusions upon this period of his life are not in full correspondence with fact.

In any case, three of the Company's letters remain to us, addressed to their representatives in Hooghly, the English factory in Bengal: in these, under dates December 24, 1675, December 15 and 19, 1676, orders are given for Thomas Pitt to be sent home. He is not, however, characterised as an interloper, and though reference is made to Englishmen engaged in trade outside the service of the Company, Thomas and two other individuals are sharply distinguished from these traders.[2] The latter were to be concentrated in Madras that a closer watch might be kept upon their behaviour, and were thus permitted to remain in India: the three men to whom

[1] *E.g.* Sir W. W. Hunter, *A History of British India*; London, 1900, vol. ii. p. 298: F. Salomon, *William Pitt*; Leipsic, 1901, vol. i. p. 3: and even the editor of Hedges' *Diary*, Henry Yule, though this very edition provides evidence contradictory of the theory (vol. iii. p. 2 ff.).

[2] Hedges, vol. iii. p. 2: 'All the English being withdrawn, the Councell sent for Thomas Pitts, and read the Honbl. Company's Order to send him to England by the first ship.'

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special reference is made—Thomas, a certain Richard Thead, and the carpenter of the *Lancaster*—are repeatedly ordered to return to England by the next ship. There is no question here of any punishment intended. Nor again are we informed that these three were outside the service of the Company. Thus the possibility that they belonged to the service remains open, and becomes a certainty when we examine other passages in the letters. The order of December 24, 1675, reads as follows: 'We now hear that captain Goodlad of the *Lancaster* has left there a certain Pytts, and that he has been received by our officer there (in Balasore); also that the carpenter of the said ship has deserted from his commander and we have information that his desertion was aided by our officer.' Again, under date December 12, 1677: 'As regards Thomas Pitt, we confirm our previous order for sending him home, for to go forth with the intention of remaining in the country or deserting the ship are proceedings which we cannot countenance, and we would prefer never to send out another seaman to you than to encourage such practices by our indulgence.' Hence it is obvious that the case of these three was totally different from that of the Englishmen interned in Madras. They were seamen and had been sent out by the Company; they therefore belonged to the Company's ship-crews and to the Company's service. They had then preferred to desert ship and to remain in the country, though not renouncing their allegiance to the Company. Thomas had a keen scent for profitable business all his life; no doubt he had immediately recognised a chance of money-making; indeed the quotations above given permit the inference, that he had embarked with the definite intention of deserting in India. At that time the Company's fortunes were at a low ebb, discipline was exceedingly loose, the directors by no means omnipotent, and there was no lack of room in India for capable men: Thomas may reasonably have flattered himself with hopes of accomplishing his design. He was, moreover, successful, for none of these orders secured his return to England.

We may, therefore, assume that Thomas began his career as a seaman. Our assumption is confirmed by the fact that he is constantly referred to as captain in correspondence. He was not a captain at the time of his departure for India; in fact, he could not then have been more than twenty-two

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years of age: he must, then, have assumed the title by anticipation. It is also highly probable that the keen and enterprising Thomas went to sea, where a career was always possible, and that he used his sailor's profession as a means of furthering his commercial capacity, with his strong inclinations to trade and with a conscience that, as we shall see, was none of the tenderest.

Thomas, then, remained for some years in Bengal, and established himself principally at Balasore, a coast-town to the south of the mouth of the Hooghly. He was on the best possible terms with the authorities, the two representatives of the Company: one of these was Mr. Vincent, in Hooghly, a notorious swindler,[1] who was afterwards convicted of serious crimes, and fled to England with Thomas; the other representative was Mr. Edwards of Balasore. Thomas married a relative[2] of these two gentlemen, and became a member and for a time even the president of the council,[3] facts which clearly prove that he could not have been an interloper. A salaried post was promised to him, but he seems not to have obtained it.[4] He was in the Company's service, for he undertook several journeys to Persia during these years, and on his return we see him delivering his wares to the factory authorities.[5] He thus occupied a respectable and in any case a lucrative position, for he was able without let or hindrance to carry on a profitable business on his own account. At one time he had valuable horses in his possession the sale of which cost him much anxiety: he seems to have been involved in a deal in ships. The orders for his return soon ceased: he received news that his enemies at home had given way;[6] he must, therefore, have had influential friends and patrons upon the central authority. In short, Thomas seems to have had every prospect of rising to rank and distinction in the service of the Company.

[1] A sketch of his life in Hedges, ii. 290 ff.

[2] Hedges, iii. 27 f.

[3] Thomas to Edwards, September 28, 1678: '. . . And besides, that wee . . . and worse than all that, that I was chief in Councell when that Mr. Bugden's vessel was seiz'd on. . . .'—Hedges, iii. 5.

[4] To Vincent, May 11, 1678: '. . . my imploy which was promised me.'—Hedges, iii. 3.

[5] Edm. Bugden to Edwards.—Hedges, iii. 5 f.

[6] To Edwards, October 30, 1679: '. . . The news is here I have and shall I hope subdue all my enemies.'—Hedges, iii. 9.

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Thomas, however, was not a character to remain unstained in an environment essentially corrupt. This possibility was precluded from the outset by his leading characteristic—his avarice. Indeed, in this respect, Thomas might be regarded as an element actively making for corruption. It was not easy to convict him of malpractices, for he was a most cautious operator, and he enjoyed the favour of those in authority. Vincent was entirely on his side from the date of his marriage, and only from Edwards had he to expect occasional indecision. Thomas was repeatedly obliged to defend himself against charges emanating from Edwards. How the final revelation brought about his dismissal from the Company, and the date of this event, cannot be made out from the letters. In an undated letter to Edwards[1] a complaint is laid against him by a certain Edmund Bugden, to the effect that upon delivery of the goods from Persia he falsified the invoice entries and altered the total number of packages to a number in favour of himself. The letter seems to have been written after his last journey to Persia, which was finished at the outset of 1681. At the same time information reached the council from Surat, the chief station on the west coast, and at that time the seat of the presidency, which was afterwards transferred to Bombay, to the effect that a certain Pitt had been meeting interloper ships in Muscat and had encouraged them to visit Bengal.[2] Muscat on the Arabian coast was a favourite emporium for smugglers where they were accustomed to store the wares in which they dealt.[3] Thomas had thus been guilty of a felony which the directors were bound to punish severely. Whether it was this occurrence which turned the scale we cannot say. The fact is highly probable in view of its coincidence with the departure of Thomas from India, which must have taken place at the end of 1681. Apart from this we read, in the admirably reliable work of Orme,[4] that in Bengal during the winter of 1682-3 certain interlopers had been supported by Vincent and Pitt, 'who had been the chief agents of the Company, but had been dismissed at short notice for irregularities of conduct.' This corresponds entirely with my reading of Yule's publication, and may be

[1] Hedges, iii. 7 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 6 f. note 1.
[3] R. Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire*, p. 127.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

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accepted as the actual truth of the case. Thomas was in the service of the Company till 1681, and was then dismissed for certain malpractices. How far enmity and slander may have contributed to this result can never be decided, but the mean and insatiable avarice apparent throughout his life lends strong colour to the charges. The theory of slander can hardly be maintained in the case of the Surat charges, as Thomas was entirely unknown in that district.

Dismissal was not likely to cause any great embarrassment to so clever and fertile a character as that of Thomas. The most obvious alternative was to join the ranks of the interlopers. Such action seems to have been entirely usual, not only on the part of those who were forced to leave the service of the Company, but also on the part of those who considered that service insufficiently remunerative. Ideas of fidelity and adherence to the great cause which the Company subserved, a sense even of decency, not to speak of noble or self-sacrificing conduct, was of rare occurrence or non-existent. The acquisition of wealth was the great point, and for this reason were contracted and dissolved connections which in other departments of life are usually founded upon a moral basis. In Surat at this time two members of the council, Petit and Boucher, had held shares in interloper ships, and fled to the protection of the Grand Mogul when their dealings were exposed.[1] Captain Dorrel, of the smuggling vessel *Crown*, had been a Company official, and occupied important posts in the service at a later period,[2] and Hedges himself, who replaced Vincent as governor at Hooghly, afterwards entered into connection with the interlopers.

The morality of Thomas was no greater than theirs. Sir Josiah Child, whose presidency of the Company was marked by a pursuit of chimerical ideas, but who strove carefully and seriously to improve the state of affairs,[3] designated Thomas as a rough and immoral character,[4] and pronounced his appointment to the governorship of Madras the worst choice that could possibly have been made. But Thomas had capacities of no ordinary kind. At the present juncture he did

[1] R. Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire*, p. 127 f.
[2] Hedges, ii. 123 ff.
[3] On his principles, see Hedges, ii. 116 f.
[4] Hedges, iii. 35.

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not merely join the interlopers as others in his position had done: he pursued higher aims. He secured the safe convoy to England by the interloper ship *William and John* of all the property which he could scrape together—the legislation of the time did not permit a confiscation by the Company—and then proceeded to enter into relations with numerous enemies of the Company, who doubtless extended a ready welcome to so powerful an ally.

At home the situation was as follows.[1] The court of directors was divided upon the question of a vigorous or a moderate policy. The champion of the former was Sir Josiah Child, an adherent of the Stuart court; of the latter, Mr. Papillon, a Whig. Child wished to see the monopoly strictly enforced and the entrance of new elements prevented, while Papillon was anxious to introduce more shareholders, and to establish the Company upon a wider foundation. In accordance with this policy the latter proposed in 1681 that a public subscription list should be opened for shares in a new enterprise, in which persons outside of the Company would thus be able to participate: he was, however, outvoted. The outside mercantile public, as they saw no prospect of inducing the Company to permit their admission, employed every constitutional means, spent their money and cudgelled their brains, to undermine and break down the Company's monopoly. The first step was taken by the Levant and Turkey mercantile corporation, an old-established and prosperous company: they petitioned the king for the opening to their ships of the route round the Cape to the Red Sea, advancing in support of their claim the fact that these coasts were tributary to the Sultan. The granting of their petition would naturally be a serious menace to the monopoly of the Company in the Indian Ocean, and all possible leverage was employed to secure its rejection, which followed in April 1683. In that year Charles II. added to the privileges of the Company, and authorised them to confiscate the ships and property of their opponents. Hence began a long law-suit to contest the legality of this regulation, which was eventually decided in favour of the king and the Company by Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys.

Thomas came to England in 1681,[2] while the outsiders were

[1] Cp. Hunter, *History of British India*, ii. 285 ff.
[2] Cp. Hedges, iii. 9 ff.

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still cherishing hopes of success, and returned to Bengal in 1682, before the royal decision had been announced. In anticipation of the expected change, he came forward as the agent of a new privileged company, which was styled the 'New English Company.' Whether he really believed in the likelihood of any such company, or whether its foundation had been begun, are questions to which there is no answer. But he seems to have been in close connection with the elements from which the company might have been formed, and was formed at a later date, and to have held a definite commission. Moreover, his style of living and the extent of his commercial activity were out of all proportion to his personal means, and we may therefore assume that the funds of this unborn corporation were at his disposal.

The dismissal of Thomas and the new connection into which he entered proved of far-reaching importance, both to himself and to his family. He became closely bound to the Whig party, remained its zealous adherent to the end of his life, and so founded the Whig tradition in the house of Pitt, which was never destroyed even by the Scottish extraction of his wife, or by the Tory sentiments of his son.

The Company regarded Thomas as something more than an ordinary interloper, as is proved by their endeavours to keep him in England and to thwart his projects.

On January 28, 1682, William Hedges set sail for India with two ships as the new governor of Hooghly. This fact must have induced Thomas to hasten his departure, and have determined his choice of a rapid interloper ship, the *Crown*, under Captain Dorrel. The Company seem to have known nothing of his intentions, and Hedges was without information of his movements. Not until he was on board did the Company get wind of the fact: they then attempted to secure an order, *ne exeat regnum* (*sic*), on the ground that a Chancery suit against him was impending. At the same time they sent orders to Bengal for his imprisonment at all costs by the native authorities. They expressed a hope that the Almighty would prevent him from overtaking Hedges, but this was not realised. On April 17, 1682, Hedges' ship, the *Defence*, sighted a vessel in 20° 27′ Lat. south which was recognised as the *Crown*, and our Thomas Pitt was observed among her few passengers.[1]

[1] Cp. Hedges, i. 20.

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Hedges knew nothing of Pitt's intentions: he was aware, however, that the *Crown* was an interloper ship, and he therefore pressed on the voyage with all possible speed. But the next day the *Crown* was out of sight, and when the *Defence* dropped anchor in Balasore on July 18, it appeared that Pitt had landed eleven days earlier and had taken the measures necessary to further his own plans.

Thomas had landed in Balasore with an armed force,[1] and had announced the downfall of the old and the foundation of the new company, with himself as its agent: with the help of his uncle Vincent and the Dutch, who had a factory there, he had levied additional troops. He then appeared in Hooghly with a considerable force, soldiers in red uniforms, cannons and buglers, entered into relations with the Dutch in that district, and proceeded to begin the installation of the new company. From the Mogul's official, the Phousdar of Hooghly, by name, Bulchund, he had secured an order of recognition and the necessary privileges, which must have cost him a considerable sum, and had begun to erect the buildings of the new factory. Hedges was considerably surprised when customs-dues upon his goods were demanded from him, the representative of the legal power.

Thus we see that Thomas did not appear as an unauthorised trader, or an interloper, but as the representative of a new power, which was attempting to oust the old Company. The ultimate failure of his attempt was due to the fact that his company never came into existence, but he gave an infinite amount of trouble to the rightful authorities. The Nabob of Bengal, Chaest Chan, to whose authority Bulchund was subordinate, displayed an inclination to support him at first: he welcomed the rise of competition on these lines, and was disinclined to continue his recognition of the old Company's monopoly.[2] It was not until some months afterwards, when the true state of affairs had become known, that Hedges succeeded in securing from the Nabob an order for the imprisonment of Thomas and Captain Dorrel. This again

[1] Report of the Council of Bengal to the Directors.—Hedges, iii. 11.

[2] Cp. Hedges, i. 49. 'He (the Nabob) further demanded whether it were usuall in this country for private merchants to trade in these parts that were not of the Comp. . . .? I' replied No; at which an eminent person stood up and assured the Nabob the contrary, and all I would say would not dissuade from that opinion.' (November 18, 1682.)

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proved useless, for the Phousdar was bribed to delay its execution until it was too late.[1] Thomas thus gained a space of six months in which to use the goods and money he had brought to the best possible purpose. At the end of January he calmly loaded his ship with the goods he had gained by barter, and accompanied by Vincent, whose behaviour had necessitated an immediate departure, prepared to sail from Balasore to England, under the very eyes of Hedges.[2] He was also accompanied by two interloper ships which had arrived from Surat during the winter and had been protected by Vincent and himself.

The Company, however, now resumed their war against the interlopers with greater vigour, on the basis of the new powers conceded by the king. The directors announced their intention of making the name of interloper an object of contempt and scorn.[3] Thomas did not come off scot-free. For the malpractices already detailed, or possibly for others of which we know nothing, he was condemned to pay a fine of £1000, which sum was adjudicated upon the hypothesis that the funds of the Company had suffered loss. He eventually paid £450,[4] a sum which was certainly disproportionate to the amount of his profits: but the fine was no deterrent to his intentions.

Thomas was aiming at something more than mere pecuniary advantage, as is obvious from the use he made of his Indian profits. With the wealth thus unrighteously acquired he bought the key which was afterwards to open the doors of Parliament, the avenue to power, for his famous grandson.

Near Salisbury, on the eastern bank of the river Avon, lay Old Sarum.[5] It had been a fortified town in earlier ages, and a considerable centre of activity, when Henry II. held the great national council of Clarendon Castle in 1164: most of the nobles, and for a time the king himself, then found quarters in Sarum. The little town afterwards received valuable privileges, and sent two members to the House of Commons in 1294 for the first time. However, the citizens were short-sighted enough to surrender these privileges, except-

[1] Hedges, i. 63 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 65 f.
[3] Cp. the decree issued by the directors to the Bengal Council of May 30, 1683.—Hedges, iii. 12.
[4] Hedges, iii. p. 16.
[5] Cp. *The History of Old Sarum and Salisbury*, 1834, p. 39 ff.

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ing only their rights of election, in return for exemption from certain imposts payable to their bishop. From that date the town began to decay, and this process was not arrested by the later restoration of the privileges. During the reign of Henry VIII. there was not a single inhabited house in the town. Under James I. this ruined site descended to the second son of Lord Burleigh, who was created Earl of Salisbury; with the site went also the ruined castle of the former earl of that name, which had been the central point of the town. The sole remnant of the former splendour was the right of election to Parliament, and this was exercised, not only by the owner of the actual site of the town, but also by the several owners of those lands which had formerly been town property: at the same time the earl's influence upon the elections was decisive, as he was the most extensive landowner, and therefore swayed the votes of his lesser neighbours. Thomas now attempted, if not to gain absolute possession of this politically important district, at any rate to bring it more and more under the influence of his family.[1] To secure this end he was bound either to buy out the actual proprietor, or to reduce him to a position of pecuniary dependence upon himself, in order to make certain of the votes attached to the component parts of the estate: to this his energies were devoted throughout his life. He began by purchasing the manor of Stratford-under-the-Castle from James Cecil, the fourth Earl of Salisbury, certainly before 1690 and probably before 1689, for he came forward as a candidate for Old Sarum for the Convention Parliament of 1689. The result of the election was indecisive, and he was not returned as member. He was, however, successful as the candidate for Salisbury town on May 30, and was thus able to share in the great revolution of that memorable year, naturally on the side of the Whigs. In 1691 he became the owner of the site of Old Sarum, and of the votes thereto attached. He had thus practically secured his possession of one seat, while at considerable expense he gained the votes electing to the other seat for himself and his heirs. It was in 1695 that Thomas first appeared as member for his constituency.

Though these new acquisitions largely absorbed his energies,

[1] Cp. Hedges, iii. 26. *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. Thomas Pitt.

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he did not give up his connection with the sea. We find him associated with other merchants in 1692 for the equipment of the galley *Arcana* which was to be sent privateering against French vessels during the war then in progress. The letters of marque are dated July 20.[1] In the next year his attention was directed to the possibility of making a harbour near his property available for ships. The manor of Stratford lay upon the banks of the river Avon which had been made navigable as far as Salisbury, a short time previously, by the influence of one John Taylor, so that there was direct connection between the manor and the sea. With the object of turning this advantage to fuller account, Thomas and three other interested parties—Charles Hedges, a judge of the Admiralty Court, Robert Woodward, a doctor of jurisprudence, and Wingfield Brockwell—tendered proposals in October 1693 for providing Christchurch at the river-mouth with harbour works, consisting of the necessary buildings, a wharf and quay, and a long pier.[2] The usufruct was then to be divided according to the capital contributed, one half falling to Hedges and one to the other three associates, so that Thomas obtained a sixth. In this way they hoped not only to gain a useful point of departure for their voyages, but also a profitable investment for their capital. However, local difficulties brought the project to an end, and the fact that the Avon was navigable proved of little value in itself.[3]

The situation in India now became more favourable to the 'outsiders' in consequence of the fall of the Stuarts, who had favoured the old Company. The Company had much difficulty in maintaining its claims before the king and the Parliament: in 1691 the outsiders actually formed a new company, though its existence was not as yet legalised.[4] Thomas, who returned to India in 1693, is to be regarded as the pioneer of this company. The king's council declined to grant him a pass for India; he was even brought before the king and council upon this question: he therefore took the course usual in such cases and announced Madeira as his destination.[5] The events of 1682 were nearly repeated. Even with the Nabob's

[1] Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1692.
[2] *Ibid.*, Sir Edward Ward, Attorney-General, to the Lords of the Treasury.
[3] *History of Old Sarum*, p. 82.
[4] Hunter, *India*, ii. 306 f. [5] Hedges, iii. 17.

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help it proved impossible to defeat the objects of the adroit trader, and charges of piracy led to no result.[1] Pitt returned to England unmolested in 1695, and again took his share in the councils of the nation as an honourable representative of the people.

At this point the career of Thomas as a so-called interloper reaches its close: he never was an interloper in the strict sense of the word. The distance between his present position and the governorship of Madras is, however, so wide as to have caused doubts concerning the identity of the interloper with the governor. Yule has been at the pains of proving this identity beyond all possible doubt by means of correspondence and entries.[2] The task seems to me unnecessary. The character with which we have to deal throughout these transactions is so emphatically original and immutable that the theory of two distinct personalities proves untenable upon close examination. To the evidence adduced by Yule may be added an allusion made by William Pitt, the grandson, to his grandfather's journey to Persia, undertaken during his career as an interloper. Previous historians have found a difficulty in the fact that Pitt was taken into the service of the old Company in 1698, in view of his earlier bitter hostility. They have known Pitt only as an interloper, and have failed to take the altered situation of the Company into account. To us the change cannot but seem perfectly natural. We know that he had formerly held a promising position in the Company's service, and had therefore maintained some sort of connection with the minority of the directorate.[3] The Company had now lost their best guarantee, the king's support, and their very existence was threatened by the formation of a rival company: no wonder that they recalled a man whom they had formerly dismissed for cogent reasons, but who had since shown himself to be an unusually capable opponent. If Thomas turned his back upon his previous associates to take up the honourable and influential post which was offered to him, such action was out of harmony neither with his own character nor with the morality of the age. Captain Dorrel followed his example, and many other cases might be quoted.

Thomas's appointment as governor of Fort St. George naturally did not follow immediately. In 1695 one of the

[1] Hedges, iii. 18 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 24 ff. [3] *Ibid.*, iii. 35.

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Company's ships was captured by a French privateer and taken to Brest: the directors then entrusted Thomas with the task of repurchasing the vessel and her cargo.[1] Their choice was directed by two circumstances: in the first place, Thomas had already carried out similar negotiations in the case of another English ship, and secondly, among the prisoners captured with this vessel, the *Princess Anne of Denmark*, was a nephew of his, by name John Pitt, with whom he was to come into collision shortly afterwards: this latter circumstance naturally turned the attention of the directors to the uncle.[2] There is, consequently, no necessity to assume that the Company availed themselves of this opportunity to bring Thomas over to their cause. It is more probable that Thomas recognised in his choice the friendly services of his nephew: for the business was one which afforded good profits and valuable privileges. Moreover, Thomas was in no irrevocable opposition to the Company. He wished to make money, and he was as ready to make it in the Company's service as by trade upon his own account. This affair at Brest may very well have reminded the directors of Thomas's existence, and when General Higginson retired from the governorship of Fort St. George, the most important post in India, and of its dependencies, they chose Thomas as his successor, no doubt under the influence of a large pecuniary subsidy, which was always indispensable in such cases. Other subsidiary motives, if such there were, will be noticed in the next chapter. Within the Company the appointment was by no means generally approved. The representatives of the old policy, headed by the governor, Sir Josiah Child, regarded it as a misfortune, but it cannot be said that the directors had any reason to regret their action.

Thomas now undertook the task of restoring order in the somewhat disturbed province of Madras: it may seem remarkable to our feeling that in pursuance of this object he was obliged to secure the expulsion of his former associates, the interlopers, but such inconsistencies passed unnoticed in those days. He began the struggle, although conditions had recently changed in a direction little favourable to his success.

On January 19, 1694, upon the occasion of an action con-

[1] Hedges, iii. 32.
[2] Cp. Letter of Thomas to John of November 12, 1699.—Hedges, iii. 47 ff.

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cerning interlopers, the House of Commons had declared that all English subjects possessed equal rights of trade in India, provided that such trade was not prohibited by act of Parliament.[1] The Company's monopoly was not based upon any such act, and the declaration was therefore equivalent to throwing India open for trade and commerce. The Commons were not, indeed, the only body with a voice in the matter, and the king did not confirm their declaration: but a strong impulse was given to the prohibited trade by their action. Nor did matters stop here. The outsiders' company, which had been already formed, secured, by means of a loan of two millions to the state, a Parliamentary act, passed in June 1698, which decreed the foundation of the New East India Company. The old Company had been able to offer only £700,000, and had therefore lost their chance.[2]

Thus began the struggle between the rivals which injured the prosperity of the old Company and hindered the development of the new. Representatives of the new company appeared in 1698 to found settlements, open up trade, and begin negotiations with the native princes. The payment of a subsidy to the government secured them the position of royal consuls, and as such they demanded deferential treatment, even from the members of the old Company. Strangely enough, John Pitt, the nephew of Thomas, appeared in this character as president and consul upon the Coromandel coast, and established himself in Masulipatam, to the north of Madras. These two men had thus exchanged positions. John had formerly been a member of the council in Fort St. George,[3] and had in other ways been of service to the old Company, while Thomas had been a supporter of the new organisation. Now it was Thomas who represented the old Company in Fort St. George, while John appeared as the mandatory of the new corporation, and it was John who had started the train of events which ended in his uncle's appointment.

John, as we learn from a letter to ex-president Yale,[4] expected to bring about the dissolution of the old Company within three years, and counted upon his uncle's support: he was speedily undeceived. The governor ignored his existence

[1] Hunter, *India*, ii. 313.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. 315 ff.
[3] Hedges, iii. 39 f.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 41.

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and declined to recognise his powers, though the rights of the company were now fully established by the new act. Remonstrances proved useless. Thomas was in possession of the old-established power, and John's first task was to secure a footing for himself, an impossible undertaking in the face of so energetic an adversary. Thomas had succeeded by very different means, when he had found himself on the Ganges in John's situation, with only an imaginary company at his back. He had not contented himself with mere declarations, but had secured his position by military power and diplomatic skill; had the company which he professed to represent come into existence it would have attained predominance forthwith. Now, however, his capacity was at the service of the old order of things, and the result shows that the decisive force in those distant regions was not law but personal character. The right of military entry, which Thomas had formerly exercised in Hooghly, was immediately forbidden to John, so far as the Company's district was concerned.[1]

The new company was unfortunate in other respects.[2] Their representative, Sir William Norris, who was despatched on a mission to the Mogul with the powers of a royal ambassador, made the mistake of landing on the east coast at a time when he must have known that the emperor Aurengzebe was occupied by a campaign in the west. The consequence was a delay of nearly a year, the blame of which fell upon the unfortunate John; the ambassador then travelled to the Mogul's camp by way of Surat, which involved a lengthy sea-voyage. Upon arrival he found that he had been forestalled by the agents of the old Company, and after protracted negotiations was contemptuously dismissed with the observation that if he would not fulfil the Mogul's wishes concerning protection by sea for the pilgrims to Mecca the road back to England was open to him. Moreover, the commercial ventures of the new company proved profitless, and John Pitt's position was anything but enviable. The struggle with Thomas continued with interruptions until John's death on May 8, 1703. His widow started immediately for Fort St. George, and at her desire, and with the governor's permission, the body was taken to Madras,[3] though without the ceremony which would

[1] Hedges, iii. 48.
[2] Hunter, *India*, ii. 351 ff.
[3] *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fifteenth Rep.*, App., part x. (Tillard MSS.), p. 89 f.

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have marked the official position of the deceased: this was omitted because, according to Thomas, he had formerly failed to salute the royal colours in Madras. On the other hand, Thomas's third son, John, lost a bequest formerly devised to him by the deceased,[1] a circumstance which caused Thomas considerable bitterness of soul.

However, this quarrel between the rival companies proved of most serious consequence to the whole of the English factories in India. Annoyed by their continual recriminations, and seizing the moment of their weakness, Aurengzebe attacked the settlements in 1701, confiscated the property, and imprisoned the occupants. Fort William, the citadel of Calcutta, and Fort St. George, were the only places to hold out. Success in this quarter was due to Thomas, who defended the place from February 6 until May 5 against the Nabob Daud Chan, and then purchased the retirement of the enemy at the comparatively small cost of 25,000 rupees.[2] In this affair the energy and the business capacity of the governor were equally manifest. These dangers and the general detriment to Indian trade and to the national prosperity arising from the co-existence of the rival companies, resulted in their fusion in July 1702.

This change, however satisfactory in itself, foreboded danger to Thomas, and marks indeed the outset of his declension. The menaces to which the old Company and its possessions had been exposed made men like Thomas indispensable at the most important posts. In spite of his doubtful past, his notorious avarice, and his domineering character, he had been appointed and he had admirably justified his choice. He had prevented the rival company from gaining the upper hand, and even from developing to any great extent, and he had repulsed the attacks of his native assailants. To him was due all credit for the fact that the old Company had successfully surmounted the crisis. Having done his duty, he might very well have retired, and it is more remarkable that he should have retained his post for another six years than that he should have been finally removed from it. In other cases removal was a far more rapid process. From the fact that he remained so long, we can understand the extent of

[1] Hedges, iii. 86.
[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 85; Hunter, *India*, ii. 301 f.

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his influence in London, and his cleverness in preserving and in using it. His correspondence testifies to the many-sided character of his connections.

The details of the process by which his gradual dislodgment was accomplished will have no special interest for readers who wish to know the essential facts of the case. Granted a previous intention to dismiss, reasons can always be found for calling an official to account, and removing him from his post. But the union of the Companies brought many discordant elements into the administrative centre, and the will to dismiss was not immediately in the foreground. The enemies of Thomas were unable to advance directly, and Thomas must afford them some ground of action before a resolution for his dismissal could be passed. These conditions were fulfilled, and, after a long struggle, Thomas was forced to yield: this struggle lends a certain dramatic colouring to the second part of his official career. That career in itself offers few features of interest. Thomas was a typical governor of the old school, a merchant before all else, and a representative of commercial interests, with no ambition for higher things, averse to all friction or hostile entanglement either with neighbouring European factories or with the native governments. By this policy he succeeded in largely increasing the productivity of the settlements, while not forgetting his own interests.

The first step towards his removal was the appointment of an overseer. For this post a certain Fraser or Frasier seemed eminently fitted. His intrigues had already driven the former governor, the straightforward Higginson, out of office,[1] and relations between himself and Thomas became strained from the outset.[2] In the year 1703 the directors gave him a seat and vote in the presidency council; the intention of this measure was at once obvious to Thomas.[3] To his friends he expressed a wish to retire from the service, no doubt because he saw before him a possibility of dismissal. However, he applied the whole of his energy to the conduct of the struggle, which began with petty chicanery, underhand accusation and

[1] Cp. J. T. Wheeler, *Madras in the Olden Time*, p. 181. Madras, 1882.

[2] Cp. the MSS. of J. B. Fortescue, preserved at Dropmore, vol. i.: London, 1892; *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Thirteenth Rep.*, App. iii. p. 1 f.

[3] Cp. Letters of Thomas to Hewer and to Styleman in London.—Hedges, iii. 84.

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slander, and ended amid scenes of tumult. As the governor held a majority of the council under his influence, he was able to defeat all attacks, but in London the good offices of his friends and the distribution of bribes were necessary to preserve a balance of power on his side.

It must be said that Pitt's behaviour afforded many an opening for attack, and even indifferent spectators became prejudiced against him. In this connection we have first to mention the business of the diamond, which brought him not only a large profit but also a certain measure of reputation. It is as 'diamond Pitt' that he is known to history at large, for the reason that one of the largest of these precious stones was placed by him upon the European market.

Thomas was quite prepared to trade in anything that came to hand—houses, ships, horses, landed property, and the most varied colonial wares: he had already done some business in diamonds. It was therefore no matter for surprise when a diamond merchant called on him, in December 1701, with an unusually large stone for sale.[1] The stone apparently came from the imperial mines of Golconda, whence a considerable amount of smuggling[2] went on in spite of a strict supervision; the Mogul might thus have been justified in claiming the stone for himself. Thomas now entered upon a course of haggling with the vendor, conducted in true oriental style. Three hundred thousand pagodas (a pagoda being worth about eleven shillings) were asked for the stone. Thomas replied with an offer of thirty thousand; after much raising and lowering of the price, lowering being the more prominent feature of the negotiations, forty-eight thousand pagodas were agreed upon, no insignificant price in view of the risks incurred by the purchaser. Only a thorough expert would have ventured to pay so large a price for an uncut stone, the nature of which was not easily recognised, while its value when cut was a matter of speculation. A single flaw in the heart of the stone, while invisible upon the surface, might deprive it of any exceptional value. As a matter of fact, the stone was con-

[1] Thomas himself gives a detailed account of the purchase: this was composed in Bergen on his voyage back to England, to refute certain suspicions then current. A copy may be found in Hedges, iii. p. 133 f., and in the Dropmore MSS., p. 48 f.

[2] Hedges, iii. 133: obs. 2.

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siderably reduced in the process of cutting, but even then the purchaser was able to make a splendid profit.

For fifteen years this diamond dominated Thomas Pitt's every thought and action. The conveyance of the stone to England by his son Robert, his cutting of it and the various attempts to sell it, laid a heavy burden of anxiety upon his mind, and caused him an infinite amount of vexation. His letters are full of it, and they cannot be said to display his character in a favourable light. Whatever the value of the stone, to make it so integral a part of life, and to embitter existence on its account, argues a profound lack of finer feeling, let alone of religious sense, a low and material theory of life, which was, however, very general at that time among the ruling classes in England.

Moreover, the possession of the diamond involved a certain amount of risk. If the purchase became known, a claim to the stone might easily be raised, either by the Company or by the Mogul. There were reasonable grounds for such claims, for officials could only carry on business on their own account within definite limits, and the right of possession might easily have been disputed. The stone was therefore conveyed to England with the utmost secrecy, and with every conceivable precaution, nor was an opportunity found for its despatch until the end of the year 1702. Even in his letters Thomas avoided any direct mention of the stone, to which he invariably refers as 'our great concern.' None the less, the transaction became known, as was inevitable, and the mystery which surrounded it led to much exaggeration. This business gave an admirable opening to the enemies of Thomas, and became a leading fact in their accusations against him.[1]

Thomas was involved in several other transactions of a suspicious character. After the union of the two companies he bought up the bills of the new company, which was deeply in debt, for thirty-nine thousand pagodas, presented them in London, and bought an estate out of the proceeds.[2] He was highly indignant when a considerable deduction was made from his profits, and his conduct censured. This affair, like

[1] 'Gentlemen of Council,' said an insubordinate lieutenant in 1709, before the council of Fort St. George, 'I am come here to accuse the Governor of buying a great diamond to the Company's prejudice.'—Hedges, iii. 116.

[2] Hedges, iii. 98 and 104.

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many others, came as so much grist to his enemies' mill. Granted that he was obliged to find some subsidiary source of income, his official salary being only £300 per annum, the fact remains that he transgressed all permissible limits by his methods of amassing wealth. It may almost be said that he used his position as governor to continue his business as an interloper upon a larger scale. In later years his preference was given to the diamond trade, to which he was encouraged by the success of his initial effort. His profits were invariably invested in landed property, which he rightly regarded as the safest and the most politically valuable form of speculation.

The occasion of his overthrow was a native outbreak in Madras, resulting from a quarrel between two castes. Thomas visited one party with punishment for its excesses.[1] Fraser then proceeded to conspire so openly against the government in concert with the chastised party, that Thomas suspended him from office in June, and declared that he would work with him no longer. The directors had therefore to decide whether they would support their governor's action and abandon their overseer, or whether Pitt should be recalled. For a long time the matter remained undecided, and the eventual decision against Thomas was dictated by other reasons than mere personal animosity among the directors or dissatisfaction with his conduct. Of the possible successors to the governorship, the candidate with first claim was a Mr. Addison, the elder brother of the poet, who had just risen to fame and favour at court. The poet's influence gained the support of many powerful patrons for his brother. Moreover, Thomas Pitt's position was weakened by the political attitude of his son Robert, who had declared for the Tories in opposition to his father's ideas.[2] Hence in 1709 the court of directors resolved to replace Pitt with Addison. They blamed Thomas for the party disturbances in Madras, and disapproved of his behaviour to Fraser: Thomas had already found difficulty in repressing a growing spirit of insubordination; it was then that Lieutenant Seaton had thrown his accusation of illicit diamond-buying in his teeth before the council; so Thomas was forced to resign his post.

[1] Cp. Hedges, iii. 109 ff.

[2] *The Wentworth Papers*, ed. J. J. Cartwright, p. 75 f. London, 1883. Peter Wentworth to his brother, January 28, 1790. The reasons for Pitt's recall are here expounded, and seem to me to throw full light upon the point.

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The change was decidedly disadvantageous to the Company, for Thomas was then upon excellent terms with the new Mogul Bahader Shah, who had entrusted him with a profitable commission as a mark of his esteem.[1] By a Danish ship he reached Bergen in Norway, and travelled thence to England by way of Amsterdam, where he made a stay of some weeks.[2]

The remainder of his life was spent in family cares, and also in family quarrels, of which we shall speak hereafter, in the extension of his estates, in parliamentary work, and in attempts to sell his diamond. He had returned from India a rich man, the first type of the Indian nabob, as those men were afterwards known who devoted wealth gained in India to securing influence and seats in Parliament at home. His wealth gave him a dominant position in the family, the members of which felt more or less dependent upon him, or were anxious to retain his good opinion in view of inheritances and other possible favours; but warmth of feeling there seems to have been none. Though high moral exhortations are not wanting in his letters, he taught his relatives by his own behaviour to regard mammon as the mightiest of all gods, and they naturally came to regard him as nothing more than a source of wealth, valuable, though the outlet might easily be stopped, which it was their business to tap by adroitness and skill. As may often be observed, it was upon the more distant relatives, with whom there was less friction, that Thomas was inclined to confer his favours, rather than upon his wife and children, who were constantly contriving to escape the crushing weight of his will and pleasure. A certain benevolence and a readiness to confer patronage where his material interests were not called in question were distinctive features of his character. He gave women of his acquaintance advice and help in their matrimonial affairs;[3] he bore the expense of educating his nephews and nieces, saying that it was not for his own children alone that God had given him his wealth;[4] he occasionally made loans to his friends without exacting interest.[5] He was

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 45.

[2] As regards the stay in Bergen, see Dropmore MSS., p. 43 ff., and for that in Amsterdam, *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fifteenth Rep.*, App., part iv. (Portland MSS.), p. 594. In the latter a certain John Drummond in Amsterdam writes to Robert Harley upon the great financial influence of Thomas, and its future value in England, asking the addressee to support the election of Thomas in Cornwall.

[3] Cp. Dropmore MSS., p. 10. [4] Cp. *Ibid.*, p. 35. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 14 f.

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also largely occupied with the construction and restoration of churches. The church in his birthplace was restored at his expense. How much of his own property was expended in this direction cannot be estimated, for in 1715 he received a commission from the state for the construction of fifty new churches.[1] This was certainly a mark of favour from the new dynasty to which he had shown consistent devotion, and whether the business produced any profit or not, it can hardly have involved him in personal expense. In any case it would be wholly erroneous to regard him as a noble character upon the ground of isolated inclinations and actions such as we have mentioned.

As regards his political attitude, Thomas remained a vigorous supporter of the Whigs. He strongly condemned the Tory leanings of his son Robert, who wished to set the French jackanapes (the Pretender) on the throne, as he angrily observes in a letter to him.[2] Similarly he opposed the address in favour of the peace of Utrecht, which the Tories had brought forward. He is said to have expressed his opinion of the ministers in scornful terms.[3] The enthronement of the House of Hanover, the dynasty wholly subservient to the Whigs, was a most satisfactory change from his point of view, as being likely to restore him to the active service of the state. And in 1716, after a great display of loyalty during the Jacobite revolt, he was appointed governor of Jamaica.

This appointment must have been decided by two factors in the situation: Thomas Pitt's political attitude secured him the favour of the Whig ministry, and his word was final in the Old Sarum elections,[4] while the disturbed state of the West India islands made the selection of a strong character imperative. As formerly in the case of Madras, so now he seemed the most capable man for the post. The state of affairs in Jamaica was at that time about as desperate as could be imagined. The white population, for the most part descendants of smugglers and pirates, were utterly immoral; they were completely outnumbered by the negro slaves, whose constant attempts at revolt were repressed by the most inhuman measures (Jamaica was then the chief centre of the American

[1] A. Collins's *Peerage of England*, v. p. 823. London, 1779.
[2] Dropmore MSS., p. 39.
[3] *Wentworth Papers*, p. 379.
[4] Dropmore MSS., p. 59.

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slave-trade); the interior of the island was populated by independent blacks, descended from the age of Spanish occupation, the so-called maroon negroes, who devastated the plantations from time to time: the political atmosphere was disturbed by continual friction between the royal governor and the assembly which represented the planters. Apart from these troubles, constant destruction was caused by frequent earthquakes and other convulsions of nature.[1]

The task of evolving some permanent order and stability from this chaos was only possible for a thoroughly energetic character, and on this account Thomas was appointed. We have no information concerning the motives which decided his acceptance of the post, but apart from the power and the political occupation which it promised, the high salary attached to the position may have been an attraction outweighing all its dangers and disadvantages. This salary amounted to no less than £6000, twenty times as much as he had received at Madras. Rich as he was, Thomas was always complaining of pecuniary troubles—he had not yet succeeded in getting rid of his diamond—and grumbling at the great expense of his family; hence so large an addition to his income was very welcome, and he hoped as usual to increase it by commercial ventures. I find it difficult to accept the statement, though it comes from himself, that the prospect of escaping family unpleasantness formed a further inducement to travel,[2] inasmuch as he must have had reason to fear that his absence would rather increase than diminish the existing tension.

Though Thomas thus readily accepted the proposal, he was obviously disinclined to plunge into this chaos until he had secured his position by strict definition of his rights and guarantees. From his correspondence with the Lords of Trade and Plantation[3] it appears that he demanded precise definitions from the government regarding the powers of the legislative bodies, the Council and the Assembly, which of their claims were to be accepted and which refused. He also de-

[1] Cp. A. Zimmermann, *Die Kolonialpolitik Grossbritanniens*, i. 245 ff.

[2] To Robert, December 4, 1716: 'I have been at great expences at home, the great diamond unsold, so in my 64 yeare of my age, I am travelling to retrieve this and seek my quiett and endeavoure to forgett it, if I can.'—Dropmore MSS., p. 61.

[3] Hedges, iii. 151 ff.

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manded security for the salary apportioned to the governor by law, and the money necessary for the payment of the troops. These were the vital points of the memorial[1] which he presented to the office responsible for the case. He was not anxious to be sent back to England by the planters as a prisoner of state, as had been the lot of his predecessor. However, the government was neither able nor willing to fulfil his wishes. The principles of constitutional law as applied to the colonies had been designedly left indefinite in order that the government might be able at any moment to extend its rights without incurring the obligation of defending them. The governor was to act as the cat's paw and to take the entire risk and responsibility of action. If he succeeded in establishing the governmental power, so much the better; if not, his downfall affected no one but himself. Nor were the authorities inclined to expend or even to invest any money in the venture. The colonies were to be as far as possible entirely self-supporting, and if the governor required money to check colonial aspirations to freedom, it was from the colony that he must procure it. This was the old Spanish policy of the age of discovery, which had been taken over by England, and here appears in documentary form. Strong personalities, sent out from the mother-country, were to create the necessary resources within the colony itself, use them to secure colonial prosperity and obedience, and so make the exploitation of the colony a possibility. It was a fundamentally selfish policy, and yet in a certain degree a justifiable policy: if the mother-country sent out her great men, she sent out much more than mere money and troops, and she might therefore claim high profits. The danger of the policy consisted in the fact that the men sent out were generally unequal to their task —either their difficulties were insuperable or they were themselves lacking in capacity and turned for help to the most abject means of action. Time brought its own reckoning in consequence, and of such reckonings English colonial history is full.

Thomas had thus made demands directly in opposition to British colonial policy: the very fact of their presentation showed the government that they had been mistaken, and that Thomas was not the man they wanted. Acts of Parliament

[1] The points of this memorial are printed in Hedges, iii. 152.

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were carefully examined to discover the true constitutional situation in Jamaica; when the extreme complexity of the situation had been ascertained, it was declared that accurate information upon details was required; in this way the question was prolonged for several months, and then another governor was suddenly appointed. Yule, the editor of *Hedges' Diary*, expresses his surprise at the absence of any further information and of any explanation of Thomas Pitt's withdrawal. It seems to me that a complete explanation is afforded by the materials published by Yule and by the non-existence of anything further. When a governor demands full powers and is kept waiting for the result of a legal search avowedly tedious, such action can only be interpreted as a polite refusal of his services. We need not be surprised that Thomas does not refer in his letters to this unpleasant business, which must have caused him considerable annoyance.

In Salomon's *Pitt* a motive for the withdrawal of Thomas is found in the sale of the diamond,[1] which relieved him from the necessity of undertaking the duties of an arduous post in his old age. A comparison of dates will show the impossibility of this explanation. The new governor was appointed on June 21, 1717, while the sale of the diamond was not concluded until June 29. It is impossible to suppose that Thomas was so careless of the future as to refuse a new source of income long before the conclusion of the sale: his decision must have been taken at a much earlier date, for the appointment of the new governor cannot have followed immediately upon the resignation of Thomas: weeks and months were usually occupied in making such appointments.

However, the final settlement of the 'great concern' must have been a comfort to the governor after his second dismissal. Great were the hopes which he had staked upon the diamond and numerous the disappointments he had suffered.[2] During the war of the Spanish Succession, when western monarchs had no money to spare, prospective purchasers had been the new King of Prussia, who greatly loved display, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Upon the conclusion of the war he had

[1] Vol. i. p. 7: '. . . this resolve was nullified by the purchase of the diamond by the Regent of France.'

[2] Details are to be found in the Dropmore MSS.

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hoped to sell the stone to the King of France or of Spain: he had also entertained hopes that the English nation would present it to their queen as a memorial of the peace. George I. had also seemed inclined to purchase. However, these possibilities were not realised. Finally, negotiations were begun with the French Regent, Philip of Orleans, who bought the stone for two million livres or £135,000. As Thomas had paid about £25,000 in purchase money, his profit amounted to some £110,000, minus interest on his capital outlay and incidental expenses. He did not regard this as an especially brilliant stroke of business, and asserted that he could have made better use of the capital in other ways; but this statement may have been nothing more than the outcome of his tendency to continual complaint and grumbling. In any case the diamond brought him a reputation which his political achievements would never have secured.

His closing years do not seem to have brought contentment, though in the case of such a character this was hardly to be expected. When a man whose whole life has been devoted to money-making complains of want and financial embarrassments in the last year of his life, his career must be regarded as a failure, whether his laments be true or false; they at least imply that he has found, as is invariably the case, no satisfaction in these pursuits, and has never risen to higher aspirations. Thus Thomas died, one of the richest and yet one of the poorest of men, for he had never encountered or inspired any real affection, least of all in the hearts of those nearest to him. A stroke of apoplexy carried him off on his estate at Swallowfield on April 28, 1726. A miserable quarrel for the inheritance was the odious and yet the fitting epilogue. Thomas was buried in the church of Blandford, which he had restored.

Such was the grandfather of William Pitt, the man who founded the reputation of the family. I have attempted to recount his experiences and his dealings, and also the character thereby attested, without reference to his relations with his family, though these are naturally indispensable for the full appreciation of his personality. But this family was divided from Thomas by distance of locality and divergence of character: it forms no unity with him, but crosses his path as an almost alien influence, and may therefore receive separate

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treatment. William's parents are the central figures of this subject and naturally the most interesting to us. In connection with them we shall refer to the wife of Thomas and the other members of the family who are of importance to our narrative.

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CHAPTER II

THE PARENTS

WHILE Thomas was working in Hooghly he married a Scotswoman, Jane, the daughter of James Innes of Reid Hall, in the county of Moray. Her grandmother, Margaret Stuart, the Countess of Moray, was a daughter of the Earl of Moray, the natural son of James v. of Scotland, and therefore the illegitimate brother of Mary Stuart.[1] There was thus a strain of Stuart royal blood and of Scottish blood in the family, which will doubtless explain the Scottish sympathies which are constantly obvious in William Pitt. The marriage also explained many personal relations. We have already seen that Jane was the niece of that coloured worthy, Mr. Vincent, with whom Thomas was working in Hooghly; she also appears to have been related to Mr. Edwards of Balasore, as he is spoken of by Thomas as his uncle, and a direct relationship seems improbable.

Concerning the personal character of his wife we know very little, for the expressions of her exasperated and embittered husband cannot be regarded as reliable. She seems to have been an independent and obstinate character, impatient of the guidance of others and inclined to insist upon her own ideas, for otherwise she would not have come into such violent collision with her husband; at the same time our sympathies are aroused by the spectacle of her defiance to the tyrant notwithstanding the material loss to herself, preferring as she did to retain her freedom rather than to bend to the power of the purse. It would be impossible to assert that she was invariably right on every point. She was, in fact, guilty of many most unbusinesslike actions, and her indifference to public rumour exposed her to suspicions which fell with

[1] Cp. Collins's *Peerage*, v. p. 423.

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special weight upon her husband. Of the truth of these suspicions we know nothing. Her years of separation from her husband and her constant visits to the fashionable watering-place of Bath, where indeed the gossip originated, made these rumours not in themselves improbable. At the same time no confirmation, or even a hint of confirmation, is to be found in any reliable source of information. In any case the whole behaviour of Thomas towards her and his treatment of the affair was utterly wrong-minded. Far from respecting her wishes and ideas even when discordant with his own, he demanded a strict performance of his orders; instead of attempting to secure mutual confidence, he proceeded to collect information upon his wife's behaviour from outside sources, and then to give credence to such reports; instead of examining the truth of the charges brought forward and coming to an explanation with his wife, he proceeded to break off connection and refused all further cohabitation. He himself said that he would make no difference between a wife who was considered bad and one who was so, for which reason he had put away his wife for ever.[1] Slander would have full weight with a man in such a frame of mind.

Whether the early years of the marriage were equally stormy we do not know. They must, at any rate, have been more peaceful than the later period, for even at the outset of his governorship of Madras the couple were united by a certain affection. Jane probably returned to England with her husband in 1681 when he left the Company's service; she is hardly likely to have braved the dangers of an interloper voyage, at any rate we have no mention of the fact. Nor did she go to Madras, though she would have gone had the district been less disturbed. Thomas probably thought of bringing her out at a later date, for in July 1701 a certain Godfrey offers to provide for her escort to India.[2] However, the project remained unrealised, for reasons at which we can only guess. Possibly the governor considered it advisable for her to remain in England to represent his interests and for the sake of the children. When his eldest son Robert had returned to England and was able to undertake these duties, his animosity against Jane had already gone so far that he had no desire to see her again.

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 23.

[2] Hedges, iii. 68.

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The fruit of this unfavourable marriage was the father of William Pitt, the above-mentioned Robert Pitt. The year of his birth is unknown, nor can we say whether he was born in England or in India. Of his education we know nothing more than that he was placed for a time with a reformed Jesuit [1] in Rotterdam, a fact casually mentioned by the father when he contemplated sending his younger son to the same place. Thomas must therefore have been pleased by the result of the experiment; nor is this remarkable when we remember the important part played by the Jesuits at that time in the colonies and in the general trade of the world. The dissolution of the Order in the eighteenth century was primarily the result of its excessive inclination to commercial pursuits, which aroused antagonism. We shall probably be correct in supposing that this teacher gave Robert the suggestion to make his first trading voyage to China, where Jesuit influence covered a wide area. We know that Robert was in connection with this Order and valued its help, as is seen from a letter of his to Pater Gerbillon,[2] the Superior of the French Jesuits in Pekin, in which he makes grateful mention of the services rendered by the Order to Englishmen in China.

Our next information upon Robert is to the effect that he, with a certain Peter Wallis, received permission from the Company on January 22, 1697-8, to live in Madras as a free trader under the usual conditions.[3] Thomas had thus taken him to India without introducing him to the Company's service. Father and son may have been inspired by different plans, and indeed they followed contrary paths for nearly the whole of their lives. It is likely that the father wished to make use of the son to carry on that business which was prohibited or unsuitable to his position as governor, and wished to keep him in leading-strings for this purpose. Robert, on the other hand, repeatedly showed a spirit of independence like both his parents, and preferred to act upon a larger scale on his own account.

The Chinese journey must have been projected before his arrival in Madras; he landed on July 6, and he writes to his mother in September, probably by the first post, announcing

[1] Thomas to his brother-in-law Curgenven, October 22, 1701: Dropmore MSS., p. 69.

[2] Dropmore MSS., p. 3.

[3] Hedges, iii. 34.

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his engagement in the Chinese expedition in terms which allow us to conclude that the project had been determined at an earlier date. In fact, as he writes to his mother from Canton, he was anxious to make money and return to England, and not to devote time to furthering his father's projects.[1] About the time of his departure the French Jesuit Father J. Fr. Fouquet, who had been appointed chief of all the China Missions, also started from Madras,[2] and the two men no doubt travelled by the same ship. Robert went first to Amoy, the little island on the coast of the straits of Formosa, and remained in Canton until the end of 1700. In February 1701 we again meet with him in Fort St. George firmly resolved to start homewards. His father's express orders, which he had already feared, prevented the execution of this plan, but he got his own way so far as to be allowed to undertake a second journey to China, which again produced a good profit, thanks to his father's energetic support. As early as October 1701 we find him in Canton, and his return to Madras must have taken place in the summer of 1702, as he began the homeward voyage to England in October of that year. Both of his China voyages seem to have brought him the rich profit for which he hoped, for shortly after payment of his father's share he was in independent possession of some eight thousand pounds, a very considerable sum at that time.

Thus he was now able to accomplish his earnest desire of returning home. His father had recently bought the great diamond, and regarded it as a somewhat doubtful acquisition while it remained in India, in the Mogul's empire and within the jurisdiction of the Company. Circumstances did not permit him to take it home himself, as he would have liked. Consequently, however anxious he may have been to keep Robert with him, he must have been glad of so reliable a messenger to whose care he could entrust this valuable jewel. He would not, however, let his son depart as early as he wished. A violent quarrel broke out over this point; Robert wished to sail with the *Bedford*, whereas, to the naval experience of Thomas Pitt, this vessel did not seem sufficiently sea-worthy for the conveyance of his diamond. Had it been merely a matter of his son's personal safety he would have shown less

[1] Concerning Robert's travels, cp. Dropmore MSS., p. 2 ff.
[2] Cp. Wheeler, *Madras in the Olden Times*, p. 184.

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interest. As a matter of fact the *Bedford* was lost on this very voyage, so that Thomas had some justification in afterwards posing as the saviour of his son.[1]

At last, on October 8, 1702, Robert was able to embark in the *Loyal Cooke*, an Indiaman with a rich cargo, which was accompanied as far as the African coast by another merchantman. He received the most detailed instructions concerning his behaviour with reference to the stone, the conveyance of which was, in fact, a somewhat dangerous business. Whatever might happen to himself he was always to provide first and foremost for the safety of the diamond, and to send news of his progress on every conceivable opportunity by sea or by land. We can imagine the anxiety which poor Thomas must have suffered when he learned, shortly after the vessel's departure, of the outbreak of war with France and of the possibility the *Loyal Cooke* might be captured by some privateer. In that event the French Crown would have come into possession of this valuable jewel at far less expense. Robert seems to have disobeyed his instructions as regards correspondence upon his voyage. He did not write until he had reached London and placed the jewel in safety.

We now come to the solution of the riddle, which will provide a complete explanation of Robert's enterprise and throw a new light upon the whole of his behaviour. As soon as he had arrived in London he married Harriet Villiers, daughter of the Viscountess Grandison and of her deceased husband, known as Edward Villiers before his elevation to the peerage.

Robert's acquaintance with this young lady and his resolve to marry must have been formed long before his return to London, for in no other event could the marriage have been so rapidly brought to pass. Moreover, we find Thomas reproaching a business friend at Amoy, Edward Harrison by name, for encouraging his son's intentions or, at any rate, failing to use his constant intercourse by way of dissuasion. Robert must therefore have gained the girl's consent and her mother's before his journey to Madras. Whether Jane Pitt knew anything of the matter we cannot say. She complains to her husband that Robert had married before she herself had had an opportunity of even seeing his wife.[2] This refer-

[1] Thomas to Robert, September 12, 1704.—Dropmore MSS., p. 11.
[2] *Ibid.*

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ence, however, merely confirms our knowledge of the rapidity with which the marriage was accomplished, and thus does not exclude the possibility that her consent, which we know her to have given, had not been accorded long previously and perhaps before the journey to India.

The position of affairs thus seems to have been as follows. In London Robert had fallen deeply in love with the beautiful and clever daughter, as he described her to Thomas, of Lady Grandison and had resolved to marry her. To accomplish this object he required money; Harriet had only a capital of £2000, and father Thomas, who was anxious for his son to make a rich marriage, would certainly have given him nothing. Even then, if he had been able to procure the necessary money, he would certainly have been met by his father's refusal. Hence it was necessary for him, on the one hand, to secure sufficient means upon which to marry, and on the other hand to dispense with his father's consent. It was not necessary to gain sufficient wealth to provide a living for all time, provided enough could be procured to enable the young couple to await the father's reconciliation or his death.

The appointment of Thomas to the governorship of Madras now occurred most opportunely. It is not improbable that the Tory relations and friends of Lady Grandison may have secured the appointment by bringing their influence to bear upon the Tories in the old Company, just as, at a later date, the Tory leanings of the son impaired the father's influence with the Whig directors of the united companies and contributed to his recall. Such influence would make more intelligible the somewhat extraordinary promotion of the former interloper. However this may have been, Robert turned to full advantage this favourable conjuncture of affairs; throughout the whole business he showed himself a clever and honourable young man who declined to yield his own inclinations to the power of his father's purse. He agreed to go to India with his father as an independent trader; he then secured the commission to China, the country where the necessary money could be most quickly procured, as he would have learned from his Jesuit teacher and from his father. Amid the dangers of that distant land business rivals were few and far between.

Shortly after his first journey it appears that he had made

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as much money as was necessary for his marriage, as he was even then anxious to return to England. His father's prohibition enabled him to increase his wealth. Then, however, to the surprise and disgust of Thomas, he evinced an uncontrollable desire to return home at once, naturally for the purpose of accomplishing his marriage. He was actuated not only by the longing of a high-spirited man of scarce two-and-twenty years, but also by the fear that his father might place some further obstacle in his way. The governor was himself exceedingly anxious to return to England, and this design might easily have been the grave of all his hopes. Robert must have breathed a sigh of vast relief when the coast of Madras finally disappeared from his view and his father's influence upon his resolves came to an end. The fact that he took no special trouble to send news of the diamond on the way can hardly be accounted to his discredit in view of this situation of affairs.

As we have said, the marriage took place almost immediately in London, and the consent of his mother and his eldest uncle formally replaced that of his father. Thus, under somewhat extraordinary conditions, was celebrated the marriage from which our William Pitt sprang. The young wife belonged to one of the highest families in the land, of which indeed the two well-known Dukes of Buckingham were members; the younger of these, formerly a member of the notorious Cabal Ministry, had died only fifteen years before. When Lady Grandison, William Pitt's grandmother, died in 1725 she was laid to rest in the vault of the 'Great Duke.'[1] As regards Harriet herself we hear nothing but praise. Beautiful, intelligent, distinguished, and virtuous are the epithets given to her in all our sources of information, while her hospitality is praised by those of her relations who visited her house. Nor is it to be supposed that her conduct on the outbreak of the family quarrel was in any way blameworthy. The above-mentioned Edward Harrison of Amoy must have sent some unfavourable description of her to Thomas, for he replied in April 1704[2] that if her character corresponded to Harrison's description he would have nothing whatever to do with her. At that time, therefore, Thomas was angry with his son's independent action and was seeking a reason for

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 74. [2] Hedges, iii. 92.

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quarrel, so that even if Harrison's statement rests upon any basis of truth it cannot have been anything very material. The governor was always ready to make mountains out of molehills, when this process happened to suit his convenience.

Robert did not immediately send news of his marriage, but merely announced his engagement to Harriet. However, the governor's business friends[1] hastened to inform him of the facts, so that he was able to learn of his son's proceeding and to reproach him with it.[2] His anger was naturally intense at seeing his influence thus disregarded, and was not lessened by the fact that so little objection to the marriage could be urged. The bride was young, only one-and-twenty, distinguished, with a moderate property and with hopes of more, highly esteemed, and possessed of intellectual and personal attractions. Nothing could be more desirable for a man in Pitt's position. If Thomas gave out what was probably the truth, that he would have liked his son to marry far greater property into the family, he at most made himself ridiculous. He therefore confined himself to immaterial objections. He informed Robert that the indecent rapidity of his marriage had given him the reputation of a feather-witted and unreliable young man. Such rapidity of action indeed, in cases where it occurred, may not have been in conformity with the social usages of the time, but Thomas knew very well that the matter had been fully and carefully considered. However, he continually returns to the point, from which fact we may conclude that he could discover no serious ground of complaint. Eventually the governor was obliged to put a good face upon it. In February 1706-7 he resolved to write to his daughter-in-law and to send her a ring;[3] when he made her acquaintance in 1710, his attitude soon became entirely friendly. The more distressing, by force of contrast, were his relations with his own wife, which had been already strained to breaking-point even before Robert's return.

To judge from their correspondence, dissension began in the year 1701, apparently for the reason that Jane used her husband's income in other ways than he desired. She considered maritime trade, in which Thomas seemed to have

[1] Thomas Styleman on November 18, 1703.—Dropmore MSS., p. 7.
[2] To Robert, September 12, 1704.—Dropmore MSS., p. 11.
[3] Dropmore MSS., p. 26.

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invested everything, a doubtful business, and preferred to purchase landed property,[1] with the result that Thomas was left without the necessary capital for his business. Moreover, Jane declined to render any account of her purchases, and was careless in balancing her accounts. Thomas was consequently reluctant to 'trust business to a woman, a thing that I shall carefully avoid for the future.'[2] Hitherto she had had full control of his property, but everything was now entrusted to his returned son and to other competent men of business. The wife, however, was not inclined to surrender her authority without a struggle. Quarrels broke out upon this question with Robert, as he assumed the control of property which she regarded as her own.[3] The daughters seemed to have taken the mother's part, and thus a general family feud was soon in progress. Jane's enemies proceeded to slander her to her husband while her daughters blackened their brother's character to their father, so that Thomas, who seems to have been without any special prejudice in this matter, was highly enraged both with his wife and his son. In Robert's case his marriage was a reason for vexation, but there were other causes, to be mentioned later. Thomas thus bursts out in indignation against them both: 'If my wife,' he writes upon one occasion to one of his agents, 'finds the income of my estate insufficient (he had assigned her a definite allowance), then she can starve and her children too, but she is not to get a penny out of you.'[4] The daughters' slanders impelled him to caution Robert always to show himself respectful to his mother[5] and loving to his sisters, although there is no reason to suppose that Robert had been wanting in this respect as far as his position allowed.[6] The most violent reproaches of

[1] Samuel Ongley to Thomas, February 26, 1701.—Hedges, iii. 64.
[2] To Curgenven, October 22, 1701.—Hedges, iii. 69 and *passim*.
[3] Dropmore MSS., p. 10.
[4] Hedges, iii. 93.
[5] Thomas to Robert, September 12, 1704: 'If what you write of your mother be true, I think she is mad and wish she was well secured in Bedlam; but I charge you to let nothing she says or does make you undutiful in any respect whatever.'—Dropmore MSS., p. 12.
[6] Robert's self-defence in letters of January 3, 1705-6 and of January 3, 1707-8 is only mentioned and not printed in the Dropmore MSS., so that we cannot gain a clear judgment of the real situation. He spoke of the complaints made against him by his mother and his sister Essex and of insults to his wife. He thus seems to have had reason at times for resenting the behaviour of his relatives.

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Thomas are always excited by utterly trivial occurrences; on these matters he stormed and fulminated, but was unable to point to any serious transgression on the part of his son. On one occasion Robert was unwilling to establish his mother and sisters in the small town house which had only four living rooms, and his father reproached him in several letters for driving the family out of hearth and home. Boundless exaggeration in such matters was, in fact, habitual to him. Eventually Thomas felt himself obliged to relieve his son of the care of the family; he transferred[1] his partial authority to his blind brother-in-law Curgenven and to a cousin, George Pitt of Strathfieldsaye, belonging to the elder branch of the family. This latter was a sensible man who thoroughly appreciated the situation; he naturally came to a friendly agreement with Robert and proved very useful to him. The sisters were at this time compelled to take up their residence in their brother's house, notwithstanding their opposition and their previous refusal. In this way their mother was withdrawn from their influence, and they were obliged to live a regular life.

Robert's quarrel with his mother does not seem to have been especially bitter, for at a later date, when the daughters were married, she became more friendly with him and his wife;[2] it was the daughters who revolted against their brother and stimulated the dislike of Thomas for his eldest son. That Essex was a girl of little character or education is plain from the few fragments of her correspondence.[3] The eldest sister, Lucy, married General Stanhope and the younger, Essex, married in the summer of 1714 Charles Cholmondeley of Vale Royal, Knight of the Shire for Cheshire.[4]

The most violent reproaches of Thomas against Jane refer to the time of her stay with her daughters in Bath. She is said there to have invited bad company to the house, and so to have compromised herself and the family. A certain Shipman, concerning whom I have been unable to discover any further information, repeated these facts to the governor, and was readily believed.[5] Thomas terms Jane's proceedings an indiscretion, but they were regarded by him in so serious

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 33. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 64. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[4] *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fifteenth Rep.*, App., part v. (Portland MSS.), p. 476.
[5] Dropmore MSS., p. 39.

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a light that he declined to consider Jane as his wife or to see her again. No doubt at the bottom of the whole matter was the unfounded gossip for which Bath was notorious. Jane herself refers to this habit of gossip at a later period when inviting her son and his wife to Bath.[1]

Jane replied to her husband's action by resigning her claim to the income of £200 a year, which he had graciously allowed her, in favour of her daughter, and Thomas was mean enough to punish her pride; he reduced the allowance to £50 a year, and arranged for each of the daughters to receive £12, 10s. instead of £25 every quarter.[2] He arrived at this decision in Bergen when returning from India, and made no change in his attitude towards his wife. No doubt he saw her again, though we have no proof of the fact, but cohabitation seems not to have been resumed. On his return home he set up a separate establishment,[3] and in his will he left his wife an allowance of only £200.

In this dismal wilderness of family quarrels the perfect harmony and peacefulness which characterised Robert's marriage stands out as an oasis. He was undoubtedly in no way to blame for these dissensions, though he and his wife may not have always adopted a strictly diplomatic attitude. His wife's connections brought him into the society of the upper nobility, where the young couple were respected, while the other members of the family were still trying to gain entrance to that society; this they seem never to have entirely attained, thanks to their respective characters, in spite of the excellent marriages they made. The mother's Scottish descent and the Irish peerage of Londonderry,[4] which the brother Thomas had gained through his wife in 1719, were not regarded with any high respect in the society to which the famous family of Villiers belonged. The mother and her family were inclined to regard Robert and his wife somewhat askance, and attempts on their part to avoid connection with this quarrelsome and gossiping circle were naturally interpreted as due to pride and a want of the sense of relationship. Their happiness, however, suffered little in consequence. A friend of Thomas, one Gilbert Dolben, was never

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 73. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 38, 43. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 46.
[4] The Londonderrys were descended from some of the first English emigrants in Elizabeth's reign. Cp. Collins's *Peerage*, v. 423.

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tired of singing the praises of the young wife, and of asserting that her beauty, her intellect, and her cheerful disposition were equally attractive, while he emphasised the happiness which the husband continually declared himself to enjoy.[1] 'Your son,' writes John Wyndham, a neighbour of Robert, to Thomas in 1706, 'is getting on very well, is respected by all the better people, and is also very happy with his admirable wife.'[2]

While Robert was attempting to find some political work, he and his wife lived in London, where he had a small house in Golden Square. At a later date, at the outset of the year 1707, Robert began to withdraw from public life, partly from reasons of health and partly because he distrusted the tendency of English politics; he then took a lease of the property of Forty Hill at Enfield, twelve miles north of London, comprising a house, garden, and fifty acres of land, at a rental of £60 per annum.[3] No doubt he also desired to find more space and healthier air for his children; he had now Thomas and two daughters. There, however, he remained only till the autumn of 1708, when his mother moved to London, and left the house in Stratford-under-the-Castle at his disposal.[4] His sister immediately seized the opportunity to leave her brother's house against the wishes of her guardians, and to settle with her mother in St. James's Street. The necessity of leading a regular existence and her position as aunt were probably by no means to her taste, and it may have been she who induced her mother to give up the Stratford residence, which was not so easily accessible to her. For the moment Robert went with his family to London, probably on account of the change of house, and remained there for the winter. Thus the second son, William, who was born in the autumn of 1708, first saw the light of day in the capital. The family then seem to have remained permanently in Stratford until the governor's death; Robert indeed appeared for a time in Blandford, but for special reasons. It was not until the death of his father and the settlement of business connected with the inheritance, which kept him in London, that he transferred his residence in

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 19. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[4] This and the following statements depend upon the report sent by Robert to Thomas on November 18, 1708.—Dropmore MSS., p. 37 f.

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1726 to Swallowfield to the south of Reading, about fifty miles west of London, where his father had been latterly living, and where he had also ended his life.

One of Thomas's most constant reproaches of his son deals with the question of extravagance. A superficial reader of the correspondence, interpreting literally the assertions of Thomas, would inevitably conclude that Robert was a careless and indifferent father who endangered the welfare of his wife and children by his love of pleasure and display, and by squandering his father's hardly earned wealth. But a careful examination of our sources of information will provide a wholly different picture.

The fact is undoubted that in the early days of his marriage Robert had made an unusually brilliant appearance on several occasions; he had, for instance, expended the considerable sum of £500 upon his election in Old Sarum. But at this time he was anxious to gain a political position, and thought it necessary to make a good entry into society; a plutocratic society demanded a certain minimum of expenditure. Again, when he admits that he had reduced his capital by half in the first four years, we have to remember that it was money of his own earning, and that he had never proposed to keep it intact; he was the eldest son of a very rich man, of whose property he might eventually claim a considerable share. It was unjust to require that he should meet at his own expense that increased expenditure which the maintenance of the family dignity and his father's interests involved. Yet this was what his father actually demanded. Thomas expressed his surprise that Robert should ask for an addition to his income, and told him that a young couple ought to live very comfortably upon the interest of £10,000, though at that moment his own business was continually bringing in large sums. Thomas had no idea of allowing any commission upon the sums which his son had collected for him on his return from Madras and on his arrival in England, apparently for the object of his marriage. Strict account was kept of every pound that he had. Yet the governor continually complains of the squandering of his property, and saw no inconsistency in reproaching his son for his mode of life and expressing the most unfounded suspicions. The Old Sarum election was constantly thrown in

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his teeth, though Robert had certainly not incurred the expense for his own amusement. An election in Oakhampton afterwards cost Thomas no less than £2549,[1] that is to say, five times the amount. As he could not clearly understand the nature of his son's many expenses, he accused him of gambling and of drinking. When Robert was suffering from inflammation of the eyes, Thomas immediately ascribed the malady to drink,[2] and expressed his views as violently as if his supposition had really been founded on a basis of truth.

The fact is that Thomas was a miser in the worst sense of the word, who wished to continue piling up money without conferring the smallest benefit upon his nearest relations. It seemed an unpardonable offence that his son should prefer his own life's happiness to increasing the family wealth and to relieving him of his burdens. His high moral sermons upon simplicity of life and thriftiness were inspired only by the fear of a possible drain upon his own well-filled coffers. Yet he was the more vigorously exploited by recipients unworthy of his bounty.

That Robert had not originally launched out into expense from any tendency to extravagance is confirmed by the strict economy which prevailed in his house when he had retired from political work. 'At his first coming over,' writes John Wyndham to his father concerning him, in 1707,[3] 'he set up an equipage of some expence, yet not of more than what his owne and a prospect of addition of fortune from soe good and able a father may well justifie; but that is all over, and now he does and for some time hath lived in as much retiredness as yourself would wish, and left this town.' Thus, in my opinion, William Pitt's parents stand beyond reproach as regards pecuniary matters. William may have learned through them the necessity for thrift and care, but he also learned that when important issues were at stake it was no time to be penny wise and pound foolish. In general William's behaviour corresponded to this pattern. In his case we find a sovereign contempt of money rather than any tendency to stinginess or cheese-paring.

Robert's political career began in 1705, when he was returned member for Old Sarum. His own election, which

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 67. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 26 f. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

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depended upon the votes of the residents on the site of the former castle acquired by Pitt, was never doubtful, and was in fact unanimous; for the other seat he was opposed by a certain Mr. Mompesson, whose election was only hindered by Robert's purchase, at considerable expense, of another piece of land for his father. The vote was controlled by an expenditure of £100. The result was an equality of votes and a protracted law-suit between Mr. Mompesson and Lord Grandison, Pitt's candidate. Eventually Robert made arrangements with another elector, Mr. Harvey, who had better prospects as a candidate, and in the year 1708 the second seat was in his possession beyond all doubt. Harvey was returned with Robert by a unanimous vote.

Robert applied himself vigorously to his political work. He was careful to gain full information at an early date upon the forms and uses then regarded as highly important in the House of Commons; he seized every opportunity of taking an active share in the debates, and was soon regarded as a rising parliamentary star.[1] Disregarding his father's wishes, he remained independent of parties and strove to work only for the general good. His conception of the general good did not correspond with his father's ideas. If he was not absolutely a member of the Tory party, still he gave expression to Tory principles, much to the governor's disgust. He could hardly be considered a Jacobite, though like many other moderate men he would have welcomed a Stuart restoration upon the death of Anne. After the enthronement of the House of Hanover he accommodated himself without difficulty to the new state of affairs, with the exception that he dared to oppose the embittered attacks of the Whigs upon men like Ormond and Bolingbroke, for which he was strongly reproached by his father.[2] From the year 1708 onwards he attended Parliament, as we have said, less frequently; for the tendency of Whig policy was not congenial to him, and when a change of ministry took place shortly afterwards he does not seem to have been inspired to take further share in parliamentary work.

After the change of dynasty his relations, and especially his brother-in-law, Lord Stanhope, who was influential at Court,

[1] Such is the opinion of H. Dolben on January 4, 1705-6.—Dropmore MSS., p. 17.

[2] Upon this and the following events, cp. Dropmore MSS., pp. 51-59.

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attempted to get him a position in the service of the Court, which would have given him some addition to his income, and would no doubt have united him more definitely to the new system. He was offered the post of Master of the Green Cloth under the Prince of Wales, which was worth £500 a year, and was practically a sinecure; notwithstanding his father's advice and his expressions of anger he could not immediately resolve upon its acceptance. This hesitation might have easily proved dangerous; while he was still wavering the Jacobite disturbances during the Pretender's revolt in Scotland broke out. In September 1715 a number of members of Parliament were imprisoned for conspiracy against the reigning dynasty, including Mr. Harvey, for whom Robert had procured the seat in Old Sarum. He committed suicide upon his capture, and his papers were immediately seized for examination.

Upon this news Thomas fell into a state of high excitement. At one time he was afraid that his son might be compromised and his own position thereby endangered; he had also a further reason for anxiety. Thomas had entered into a legal contract with Harvey, according to which, in the event of the death of either one of them, his heirs should pay the survivor the sum of one hundred guineas. Hence he was firmly convinced that the prisoner had been anxious to secure his own execution simultaneously with that of the royal family in order to lay hands upon this sum of money. In fact he regarded the whole conspiracy as a plot directed against himself. His son, who was in no way compromised, was now exposed to the full weight of his father's anger, who upbraided him for associating with murderers and attempting to take them under his protection. His rage was only appeased when his son showed himself ready to make preparations for defence against the threatened Jacobite invasion. For this purpose Robert made a considerable stay in the autumn of 1715 in Blandford, the point of greatest danger, where he armed the militia, and took all necessary measures to repulse the dreaded attack. Thomas with unusual liberality spent money on arms and supplies, so far as this seemed necessary, and kept himself informed of the enemies' movements until his anxiety was ended by the news of the rapid overthrow of the rebels and the flight of the Pretender.

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Disputes, however, concerning the post in the royal household broke out again forthwith. Robert declined to bow beneath the yoke which his brother-in-law, Lord Stanhope, and his father wished to lay upon him. He adopted a distant attitude to Stanhope, wounded his father and his sister at the same time by declining to notice her children when Thomas brought them into the room, and could not be persuaded to wait attendance upon the prince. His step-father-in-law, General Stewart, Lady Grandison's second husband, went to considerable trouble to persuade him to give in for reasons of policy; at that moment Thomas had been nominated to the governorship of Jamaica. Eventually he seems to have accepted the post,[1] but he remained in Stratford, and the quarrel which broke out between the king and the prince in 1717, and was temporarily brought to an end in 1770, may have diverted the attention of Thomas from his son's absence from the Court. The matter is interesting to us, in so far as it marks the first connection between the Pitt family and the later King George II., under whose reign our William Pitt was to attain such high importance. That this connection was not of the friendliest nature, and that William's father declined to receive a favour from the heir-apparent, may well be surmised, in view of the difficulty which the son found in securing the favour of this same prince when he required it for his own advancement.

Robert thus certainly cherished Tory opinions, which he may have derived from his wife's family, and perhaps also from his Scottish mother. He was not, however, a man to struggle against existing tendencies, although he refused invariable compliance. His father's reproaches, stigmatising him as a Jacobite, and as the ally of the king's murderers, were certainly wild exaggerations. The project of setting on the throne the 'French jackanapes,' as Thomas called the Pretender, could only have occupied his mind for a very short time when he thought the current of opinion was setting in that direction. In the new period of Whig supremacy he held aloof from political life. He was one of those silent natures who quietly leave the conquerors in possession of the field, and so take all purpose from opposition attacks, without coming forward on the side of the active minority. This

[1] Collins's *Peerage*, v. 423.

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policy of quiescence may have been actuated both by consideration for his father and for his own impaired constitution.

Robert suffered from the same disease which afterwards plagued his son William, the gout, which was thus apparently a family inheritance. It particularly affected his right hand, and for a time he was unable to write. When he was first attacked by it we do not know. He first refers to it in the year 1722, in conjunction with other painful diseases, gravel and stone. His premature death in 1727 may no doubt be ascribed to these causes.

Robert's pecuniary affairs and those of his family remained on a somewhat narrow footing until his father's death, according to English ideas and in view of his high social status. When Thomas had seen the state of affairs for himself, and had acquiesced in Robert's marriage, he naturally could not cut off all supplies, if only from regard to his own dignity; moreover, Robert shared the work of administering the large estates. At any rate he paid him with continual grumbling enough to raise Robert's income at most to £1400.[1] Out of this he had to provide for his wife and seven children, and for the expensive education suitable to their position. We might suppose that on his father's death in 1726 he should have come into a brilliant inheritance as the eldest son and heir. In the year 1717 Thomas had added to all his other wealth the enormous sum of £110,000, the profit on the sale of his diamond. In legacies and annuities some £26,000 capital and about £1500 a year reduced his total wealth, so that upon the whole we may say that his capital suffered a general reduction of more than £54,000. At the same time a very large sum must have remained, and the more so as the annuities were not a drain upon his capital, but were derived from landed property. Moreover, of these annuities £1100 per annum and £1100 in legacies were left to the benefit of Robert's children, which was a corresponding relief to himself. Thus, in the strict sense of the word, only about half as much as the sum above mentioned was alienated from him. Yet the chief heir complains that his position after his father's death was little better than before, and he is unable to leave any

[1] Thus Robert informs his son Thomas, under date November 25, 1726.—Dropmore MSS., p. 84.

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capital to his son William or to increase his income. The young statesman's resources were confined to the annuity of £200 left by his grandfather, apart from the salary of his office.

Our sources of information provide a fairly complete explanation of this strange inconsistency. In November 1726 (Thomas had died at the end of April) Robert brought a suit in Chancery [1] against the Earl of Londonderry (his brother Thomas), against Robert Cholmondeley (his brother-in-law), and against a lawyer, in their capacity as executors. The suit averred that the testator, Thomas Pitt, had died in possession of capital exceeding one hundred thousand pounds, which had been left to Robert as chief heir, but that the Earl of Londonderry had borrowed from the testator a sum of more than £95,000, for which he had given receipts and due acknowledgments of indebtedness. The chief heir and the three executors had sealed up the testator's papers after his death, and had agreed that the seals should remain unbroken until the making of the general inventory. During a short absence on the part of Robert from London, the other three were said to have broken the seals, and to have carried off all those documents, together with money and jewels. Londonderry, in reply, not only denied his indebtedness to the estate of £95,000, but demanded repayment of some £10,000, which he asserted was owed to him by the testator, a debt which the will showed to have been already repaid.

Nothing is known of the result of this law-suit, but it can hardly be supposed that so serious a charge against Londonderry and his companions was wholly groundless. Whether a robbery to this amount had taken place may be considered as doubtful, but the fact that so honourable a man as Robert felt himself induced to utter such a charge against his own brother, and to substantiate it before a law-court, shows the brother in any case in a most unfavourable light. The least that can be said is that the estate of Thomas Pitt must have suffered enormous diminutions, only to be explained by the many loans continually effected by his noble son. It is very probable that Thomas must have given up hopes of repayment, and returned the earl his acknowledgments of indebtedness before his

[1] Printed in the Dropmore MSS., p. 85.

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death; his relations with Robert were always strained, and probably he did not wish his second son, of whose distinguished title he may have been proud, to be reduced by debt to a position of dependence upon his elder brother, while at the same time he did not wish directly to infringe his eldest son's birthright. In one of his letters Thomas distinctly states that he was unwilling to see the younger brothers and sisters dependent upon Robert.[1] It may be considered as true that the three executors really broke the seals in the absence of the chief heir, but for wholly secondary reasons. Two of them would certainly not have consented to theft. Robert himself afterwards found himself obliged on his own responsibility, though in the presence of witnesses, to examine the documents in order to draw up an account of his possessions. Whatever the truth of the affair, the money was gone, and we have every reason to suppose that it had gone to the Londonderrys; hence are to be explained the many lamentations of Thomas concerning his want of money at a time when he was believed to be living in abundance. His complaints generally bore upon the excessive demands of his children, and as we only possess his letters to Robert, it is natural to suppose that the latter was guilty of extravagance. The truth is that the other children with whom he was on better terms, and from whom he was divided by no political differences, drew upon his resources far more heavily, though with promises of repayment. And, finally, unless we prefer to believe the story of theft, they persuaded him to remit the whole of the debt. It is no matter for surprise that Robert, who knew of the existence of the great debt, and possibly suspected that it had been cancelled, made use of the unauthorised breaking of the seals to secure a legal decision in his favour, or at any rate to force his opponents to conclude a compromise advantageous to himself. Possibly Londonderry was obliged to give up at least his claim to the £10,000.

Lord Londonderry's habits of business in pecuniary matters were somewhat extraordinary, as appears from a second charge brought against him by Robert.[2] Earl Stanhope, Lucy Pitt's husband, had died before his father-in-law, Governor Pitt; the Governor had accepted the guardianship of the heir, Philip, Earl Stanhope, but had left the details of business

[1] Hedges, iii. 112.

[2] Also in Dropmore MSS., p. 85.

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to his son Londonderry. The latter had appropriated different sums during his guardianship, of which he could produce no account, and on the death of Thomas he threw the responsibility for the deficit upon him as the proper guardian and upon his heir; hence the prosecution begun by Robert. Robert, indeed, must have suffered continual vexation over the business connected with the inheritance. Claims were raised upon him from all sides, and Londonderry sneeringly remarked that he need not call himself residuary legatee, as he was not likely to get any residuum.[1] Thus we have a full explanation of the fact that William Pitt's father was in no such easy circumstances as he might have expected, and that even after entering upon his inheritance his pecuniary troubles continued. These events did not tend to improve his relations with his brothers and sisters. In June 1726 Robert was obliged to forbid his son Thomas, under pain of his displeasure, any kind of connection with his uncle on account of the latter's disagreeable behaviour.[2]

The last year of Robert's life was embittered by differences with the above-mentioned eldest son,[3] who was then travelling upon the Continent, and visiting the Netherlands, not primarily for educational purposes. Once again pecuniary differences were the point at issue; the son declined to suffer any curtailment of the allowance of £700, which he had hitherto received; at the same time there seems to have been here some deeper cause of dissension, which may be regarded as a survival of the breach between Robert and his father. Robert reproaches his son for taking refuge under his grandfather's protection, and thus losing all claim to his father's consideration. It is not improbable that the young and impecunious man had been petted and influenced by the rich grandfather, with the result that he was foolish enough to disregard his father's views, and to adopt an arrogantly independent attitude. He even left London without his father's permission, and his correspondence was extremely irregular. If Robert desired to deduct £200 from the £700, which he had granted him before investigating his father's affairs, there was every reason for such a deduction in view of the unfavourable financial situation disclosed by an examination of the estate.

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 86. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[3] Cp. the correspondence with him: Dropmore MSS., p. 76 ff.

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Robert died in May 1727, and thus survived his father a little more than a year. His death was somewhat premature; he must have been between forty and fifty; our sources of information say nothing of the cause, but we know that he had been suffering for some time from gout and other maladies, an increase of which probably carried him off. So late as June 1726, he wrote to his son Thomas that he had never been in better health than then, and was as likely to live another five years as any man in England; some financial question was being discussed in which the point at issue was his life. These hopes were, however, deceived. He left behind him a wife, who no doubt sincerely mourned him, for their good relations had never been disturbed, and seven children, two sons and five daughters. The fourth child was William, who was then nineteen years of age. Unfortunately we know nothing further of his mother Harriet's life, except that she died in Paris on October 21, 1736, and was buried in Blandford St. Mary's, the resting-place of her father-in-law.[1]

Such is our knowledge of the lives and destinies of William Pitt's parents. The question naturally arises: How was our hero's youth influenced by this environment and what powers and capacities did he draw from this source and realise in his own person? These questions will form the subject of our next chapter.

[1] Thackeray, i. Genealogical table.

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CHAPTER III

YOUTH

The scantiness of our information concerning Pitt's youth is a somewhat striking and hardly explicable fact. The documents which provide us with information about his parents and grandparents hardly mention William's existence, nor have we any other source of information whence to draw for a more detailed account of his early life. This is hardly a matter for surprise: such gaps in tradition are of frequent occurrence, and are due solely to chance. But in view of the extensive correspondence which Pitt has left to us, in view of his many letters existing, both in published form and in manuscript collections, and in view of all his speeches, it is somewhat extraordinary that there should be hardly a reference to his early years, even in cases where such reference might be readily called forth by the context. Whether this fact is the result of pure chance or of definite intention is a matter of doubt. It may be possible that Pitt intentionally avoided speaking of these years, for the reason that his recollection of them was none of the pleasantest: he may have suffered hardships and severity, or may have had some ground for self-reproach. It is, moreover, characteristic of many men to refrain from using the heights they have attained as a point of view for introspection of the depths from which they have slowly risen, and this, whether their position be one of moral or of material ascendency. Whether the silence of our authorities is thus to be explained cannot be finally decided, but we shall see hereafter that much may be said in favour of this theory. We have now to recount such scanty information upon Pitt's early years as is provided by our authorities.

William Pitt, as we have already stated, was born at the

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moment when his parents had given up the estate they rented at Forty Hill, near Enfield, and had removed for a time to the capital. The event took place in the early morning of November 15, 1708, and was announced by the father to the Governor, Thomas Pitt, in a few words at the close of a long business letter. 'My wife was intending to write to you to-day, but she was suddenly prevented early this morning by the birth of a second son. We have now two boys and two girls.'[1] Such was the father's curt announcement of the arrival of this youthful citizen, who was afterwards to be counted one of the first statesmen of England. His birth is regarded as of value merely as a happy excuse for long delayed correspondence; that Harriet really entertained an intention of writing is by no means certain, in spite of Robert's statement. Such excuses are a matter of common experience. It was not in London proper, in the city, that Pitt was born, but in Westminster, lying to the west of the city but connected with it by lines of streets; then, as now, this district formed the fashionable quarter, and Robert's house lay to the north of it in the parish of St. James.[2] It cannot be determined whether this was the house occupied by the parents immediately upon their marriage, in which case Pitt would have been born in Golden Square to the east of Regent Street. Golden Square lay in St. James's parish and not far from the house of grandmother Jane, in the upper terrace of St. James's Street,[3] but these facts naturally do not form decisive proof. The baptismal ceremony must have taken place before the 13th January 1708-9, as upon that day Robert refers to it in a letter to his father.[4] The sponsors were 'Cousin Pitt,' *i.e.* George Pitt of Strathfieldsaye, who was regarded in a sense as the head of the family, being a descendant of the older line and great-grandson of the former Sir William of Inwerne: as such, indeed, Thomas had entrusted him with the care of the family in place of Robert. The other sponsor was General William Stewart, the second husband of Lady Grandison, and therefore Robert's step-father-in-law. It was from him that the child's baptismal name of

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 38.
[2] Thackeray, *History of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, i. 2. London, 1827.
[3] Dropmore MSS., p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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William was taken, though this name was of so frequent occurrence in the Pitt family that the choice must have been fairly obvious. Robert's selection may further have been decided by his memory of a brother named William, who had died prematurely.

The boy's first years were spent in Stratford, where he must often have played upon the square of the old castle which his grandfather had already laid out with trees, without a suspicion of the importance that this square, and the rights attaching to it, were to have upon his future. His elder brother Thomas, born in 1705, had been sent in 1711 to London for a time to his grandmother Jane, where he was well looked after by his aunts.[1] William, who was then three years old, naturally remained with his mother. It was not until 1715, when the Jacobite disturbances broke out, and Harriet accompanied her husband to Blandford, that the children all removed to the capital, and on this occasion to the house of Lady Grandison, who had left her Irish property (situated between Cork and Kinsale) and had come to London with her husband to make a lengthy stay. The grandfather, Thomas, displayed kindly interest[2] in them upon many occasions during their stay. He invited them to his house, and visited them in theirs. He presented the girls with beautiful fabrics which he constantly received from India, and which were then made up for them by Mrs. Cholmondeley, while it is unlikely that the boys were forgotten. Upon the suppression of the rising Robert returned with his family to Stratford. Shortly afterwards a fresh interruption of their usual course of life seemed to be in prospect when Thomas was preparing for his departure to Jamaica.[3] With the object of composing the differences that had recently arisen between himself and his father, and of giving him a joyful surprise, Robert prepared to be present at the departure with the whole of his family. At that date the young Thomas must have already entered the school at Eton, for he was to

[1] Miss Essex Pitt sends information on this point to the mother, in her extraordinary orthography: 'Master Tommy is very well. I think the town agrees with him, for he have a fine coller and groose fat.'—Dropmore MSS., p. 50.

[2] Dropmore MSS., pp. 53 and 58.

[3] Cp. William Stewart to Robert, September 7, 1716.—*Ibid.*, p. 60.

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be summoned to London for this event. The children eagerly looked forward to the military spectacle which would be afforded by the march past of the out-going troops. These hopes came to nothing, for, as we have already seen, the appointment of Thomas to the governorship of Jamaica was cancelled.

I have been unable to discover in what manner William received his early education. He seems to have entered Eton somewhat late, and it was there that most of his literary education was acquired. Our first definite reference to his membership of the school dates from August 1721;[1] we learn from a letter of Jane to Harriet,[2] dated May 1720, that certain plans were in prospect for the boy's future, and we may therefore suppose that the advisability was first discussed of sending him to that fashionable foundation. Probably the real subject of these discussions was the possibility of providing the necessary funds, for which purpose appeal was to be made to the grandfather; for this school, which educated the sons of the most aristocratic and wealthy families in the country, was highly expensive. At the present day the cost of maintenance amounts to some two hundred guineas, and at that time the fees must have been proportionately high, and in any case too heavy a burden for the father's narrow means.

Hence we shall probably be correct if we place William's departure for Eton in the autumn of 1720. He had then completed his twelfth year, and was at the best age for leaving home. Naturally he must have received some previous instruction, but of this we know nothing; apart from parental teaching, some tutor may have been called in from among the local clergy; at any rate it was at this period that the foundations of his moral and political character were laid. The tone of family respectability, the hearty sympathy of his parents, and the Tory principles of his father cannot have been without their influence upon the character of the boy. Experience shows that the associations of early youth are the most permanent and indelible, and that their influ-

[1] Thomas to Robert, March 10, 1721.—Dropmore MSS., p. 66.

[2] Jane to Harriet, May 7, 1720: 'What you write about your son Willy I hope will be brought to pass, if you can prevale on your uncle Villers to have a little patience.'—*Ibid.*, p. 64.

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ence continues throughout life however they may be overshadowed or effaced by other impressions. And so in the case of William Pitt we can recognise a distinctive aristocratical Tory strain in his character which is chiefly to be ascribed to the influence of his home.

William's school life at Eton lasted about six years—until 1726. Eton lies on the Upper Thames opposite Windsor, and so only a few miles from London; to the west lay Swallowfield, the grandfather's residence, on the river Loddon, a southern tributary of the Thames; hence if the Governor went to London his road led him nearly past Eton, and similarly, when the boys went to and fro between Eton and Stratford at the beginning or end of their holidays, they could reach Swallowfield without going out of their way. The two grandchildren, or William by himself, after the young Thomas had gone abroad, were often driven by their grandfather to his fine estate, or driven back from thence to Eton.[1] At the beginning and end of the holidays they spent many a day there in unrestrained liberty. William seems to have found his way entirely into the Governor's good graces. 'He is a hopefull lad,' he wrote to Robert,[2] 'and doubt not but he will answer yours and all his friends' expectations.' From so casual an appreciation it would be erroneous to conclude that Thomas had foreseen his grandson's future greatness. Apart from these cases the Governor was not inclined to issue invitations to his grandchildren. One or two visitors he did not mind, but he objected to a whole family, because, as he said, he could not have his habitual comfort disturbed.[3] Any one, however, who was invited was certain to enjoy himself, and could romp about to his heart's content.

Romping in William's case was, unfortunately, a limited amusement, for from the outset his health was far from robust. In 1718 Thomas had the opportunity of buying an estate upon terms of 'Life Tenure' as English law has it, that is to say, the tenure was limited to the lives of several members of a family; in the case before us of three members, so that upon the death of the last of the three the estate would revert to the former owner or to his heirs. Thomas was somewhat doubtful of the advisability of making William a party to the bargain, thinking that he might be carried off

[1] Dropmore MSS., pp. 66, 73. [2] *Ibid.* p. 73. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

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prematurely by some infantile sickness.[1] We find, too, that upon one occasion he was kept at home in Stratford after the conclusion of the school holidays, no doubt for reasons of health.[2] We know that it was at Eton that the first traces of that malady appeared—the gout,[3] which was to torment him throughout his life, to impede his energy, and finally to cause his death. It was an unfortunate inheritance from his father, and seems to have been somewhat prevalent in the family. A rational course of treatment, by which the malady might have been checked, was apparently never attempted, either at school or at the university, otherwise it would hardly have made such progress during his youth. Indications confirming the truth of this supposition are to be found in the *Chatham Correspondence*, as we shall afterwards see. In any case the gout prevented his participation in athletic exercises, which to some extent compensated for the stern discipline which prevailed. That he acquired a great fund of knowledge by reason of this infirmity, as Lord Chesterfield is said to have stated,[4] I can hardly believe without further proof. From the letters which he afterwards wrote to his nephew, Thomas Pitt, the son of his elder brother, his bitter regrets are apparent to any one who can read between the lines, that he had never enjoyed a guidance which would have directed him to studies of real value and permanent benefit.[5] Thus, under the burden of compulsion, he probably did little more than he was obliged.[6] This intimation in no way excludes the statement transmitted to us that his capacity was both obvious and surprising to his teachers.

An Eton boy at that time found himself in a hard school of training. In was an age in which pedantic methods of teaching were in vogue, and when the efficiency of an institution was judged by the severity of its discipline. Naturally, so ancient and so famous a school as this foundation

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 63. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[3] Thackeray, i. 3.
[4] Almon, *Anecdotes of Chatham*, London, 1860, i. 6: 'That thus (through the gout) he acquired a great fund of premature and useful knowledge.'
[5] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 81 f.
[6] Cp. *Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons*, ed. Seward, London, 1798, ii. 393: 'Lord Chatham was educated at Eton, and in no very particular manner distinguished himself at that celebrated seminary.'

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of Henry VI. was bound to take the lead. Pitt himself asserted in after years to Lord Shelburne[1] that he had hardly known a boy whose spirit had not been broken at Eton; and that while a public school might be an excellent thing for a youth of hot and violent character, it was not the place for a tender or docile disposition. The young William, with his lively and yet fundamentally serious character and his feeble health, may have experienced the force of these facts, and we can understand his reluctance to recall this part of his life. Under these circumstances, too, he would have gained much greater benefit from a longer stay at home, where he would have been secure of the father's careful guidance which he greatly desired, and of his mother's care. He had to thank his uncle Villiers, afterwards Lord Grandison, for his hard lot, for it seems that the resolve to send the boy to Eton was due to his persistency.[2]

As regards the matter of his education at Eton, as at all schools of the kind, the chief subjects of instruction were the ancient languages and ancient history. The knowledge of these subjects which he then acquired remained a permanent possession, and in later years his quotations were drawn by preference from Latin authors, his examples and analogies from Greek and Roman history. He seems, however, to have paid less attention to Greek, and advises his nephew against the study of the Greek language:[3] Homer and Demosthenes were probably only known to him in translations.[4]

Concerning his masters and tutors nothing more is known than the fact that the head-master was one Dean Henry Bland, who held that post from 1720 to 1728. He is said to have fully recognised Pitt's high capacity.[5] Pitt does not seem to have formed any permanent connection with any of the teaching staff. His name is not to be found upon the school rolls with those of his relations and friends, for the reason that they did not belong to the alumni, but lived outside the school precincts; intercourse, however, was so close that

[1] Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, i. 72. London, 1875.
[2] Cp. above, p. 70, note 2.
[3] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 68 f.
[4] Seward, *Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons*, iii. 393.
[5] Thackeray, i. 2. *The History of the Colleges of Winchester, Eton, and Westminster*, p. 60. London, 1816.

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life friendships might easily be formed, and as many future officials and statesmen were here educated together, these friendships might become of political and historical importance. The *Amicitiae Etonenses* were well known for their permanency and influence.[1] Thus the young Pitt here formed connections which either continued throughout his life or were of importance to his future career.

For the moment he found himself surrounded by near relations. Apart from his brother Thomas, who left in 1723 or 1724, two cousins were at the school, so that for a time the Governor[2] could write that four of his grandsons were at Eton. One of these was the young Earl Stanhope, who had inherited the title on the death of his father in 1721, and lost his mother shortly afterwards, in 1722. He came to Eton in 1723.[3] The other may have been the son of Londonderry, who had entered the school at an earlier date. These, however, were not William's chief associates. He can have had little in common with his brother, for he was too insignificant[4] and too young. Lord Stanhope was at least five years younger, and we do not know that he was in any sort of connection with the other cousin. But he found other and far more congenial friends.

Of these the chief was George Lyttelton,[5] the eldest son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley, in Worcestershire, who held a post in the Admiralty in 1727, and was one of the supporters of Robert Walpole in Parliament. As George was born in 1709, he was of about the same age as Pitt, and displayed at Eton unusual industry and capacity. His compositions were shown as models to his school-fellows, and at an early age he displayed that poetic talent which has made him famous. He, too, was of a delicate constitution (he is said to have been a seven months' child) while in other respects also he was

[1] Creasy, *Eminent Etonians*, p. 254.

[2] In May 1724 the Governor declares himself ready to provide for Thomas's education abroad.—Dropmore MSS., p. 73.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[4] The character sketch which Shelburne gives of him (Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, i. 71) may have been painted in too gloomy colours, but emphasises the lack of congenial feeling between the brothers.

[5] Cp. as regards his life, *Memoirs and Correspondence of George, Lord Lyttelton*. ed. R. Phillimore, 2 vols. London 1845. Creasy, *Eminent Etonians*, p. 268 ff.

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Lord Lyttelton.

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a character akin to Pitt, so that no obstacle arose to a close acquaintanceship; he and Pitt entered Oxford University at the same time, began their political career together, and worked in co-operation for a long period.

Other members of the school at this time were the brothers Richard and George Grenville: the former of these was about Pitt's age, and the latter somewhat younger. With them he seems to have been less closely associated than with Lyttelton, for it is not until a later period that we discover an intimacy between them, brought about by Lyttelton's good offices. In the case of Richard the intimacy continued for life, and was confirmed by Pitt's marriage with his sister. Richard left Eton after his father's death in February 1726, to continue his studies abroad, at which date George entered the Temple to begin reading for the bar.

These three school friends, and Lyttelton in particular, brought Pitt into connection with a group of relatives which became highly important for its influence upon his career, and was united to his family by two marriages. The best name for this group seems to me to be the Temple family.[1] A country gentleman, Sir Richard Temple of Stowe, had one son and four daughters. The son became Viscount Cobham of Stowe, whom we shall afterwards meet as one of Pitt's patrons. The eldest daughter, Christian, married Sir Thomas Lyttelton and became the mother of George. The second daughter, Hester, married Sir Richard Grenville of Wotton; their children were the above-mentioned sons, Richard and George, and some others, together with a daughter, Hester, who afterwards became Pitt's wife. This sister seems to have been Lord Cobham's special favourite, and to her he bequeathed his property, which then passed to her son Richard. Sir Richard's third daughter, Penelope, married a certain Moses Berenger and disappears from our view. The fourth daughter, whose Christian name is unknown to me, became the wife of one Dr. West. Pitt's relations with this family were close and constant. The whole group may be regarded as the foundation of the young opposition party which he afterwards joined, and in which he was to become the leading character.

Another friend of importance for his influence upon Pitt's

[1] Cp. on this point, *The Grenville Papers*, i. 1 ff. and 422 f., London 1852; also the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

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career, was Charles Pratt, the son of Sir John Pratt, deceased, Chief Justice of the King's Bench.[1] He also was a most capable and industrious scholar. He was anxious to make acquaintances in order to compensate for the loss of connection which he had suffered through his father's death. In this effort he was to some extent successful; after long waiting in the hopeless obscurity of a junior barrister's position, he became known to Sir Robert Henley, afterwards Lord Chancellor Northington, who recognised his powers, and was able to give them full and brilliant scope. But an almost more important influence upon his success was the friendship contracted with Pitt at Eton, for as soon as Pitt rose to office he went considerably out of his way to advance Charles Pratt. It is possible that Henley's interest in Pratt was also due to Pitt, seeing that these two men were closely associated at Oxford and afterwards. In Pitt's first ministry, Pratt held the office of Attorney-General; upon Pitt's resignation he was obliged to content himself with the politically unimportant office of a judgeship in the Court of Common Pleas. When Pitt came into power for the second time, Pratt was created Lord Camden and made Lord Chancellor of England; this office he had again to resign upon Pitt's second retirement. Thus the career of the judge ran very parallel to that of the statesman both in its rise and in its declension, for Pratt nobly refused to sail with the stream, although he did not go out of his way to provoke opposition.

Pitt also benefited directly from their association. It was to him an exceedingly useful friendship, for upon questions of constitutional and international law he could gain first-hand information from Pratt. Pitt's legal education had been somewhat incomplete, and without Pratt's help he could not have sustained the continual course of debate with his excellently informed adversaries. We cannot go so far as to say that Pitt's ideas upon such subjects as the Wilkes affair and the American question were directly derived from Pratt; but Pratt's theories conformed to his own, or corresponded with his ideas, so that Pitt could work upon equal lines and accept his cleverly elaborated expositions.

Of importance also to Pitt, but in a wholly different direction, was his association at Eton with a third personality destined

[1] Creasy, *Eminent Etonians*, p. 253 ff.

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to political fame; this was Henry Fox, afterwards Lord Holland.[1] Here there was no question of friendship, for the two characters were utterly different; but the accurate knowledge and the close understanding which each secured of the character, the intellect, and the qualities of the other, could not be without influence upon the attitude afterwards adopted by either statesman. Each of them knew what he had to expect from the other and took his measures accordingly. Fox was born in September 1705, and was the son of Stephen Fox, a landed proprietor, and of Christian, daughter of the Rev. Chr. Hope of Norseby. He lost his parents at an early age, and being left in the possession of independent means, was able to give rein to his frivolous character. At Eton he was known as a cheerful and amiable companion, who gained many friends, and also as a shrewd and hard-headed thinker, but at the same time as an utterly spoilt character with little respect for morality or religion. He also went to Oxford. At a later date, following the fashion of the day, he sacrificed his property to his passion for gaming; his relations helped him to keep above water, and he was able to rise in the world and become of political importance. He made a distinguished marriage with Lady Caroline Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond; he had made the acquaintance of her grandmother, the well-known Duchess of Portsmouth, at one time the mistress of Charles II., in France. The marriage was celebrated in secret, and as Fox was unable for the moment to secure the consent of the family, it proved of little immediate advantage to him. It was not until he had secured his position in the state by independent effort that his marriage was recognised. He was invariably in strong opposition to Pitt, by reason both of the political principles which he followed, the means which he employed, and the connections which he made, all of which were equally repugnant to Pitt. Only some unusual shifting of party balance, such as occasionally occurred, could bring these two men into the same camp. The opposition is to be explained by the fact that Fox threw principle to the winds when any material advantage was in prospect. He has been designated, and not without justice, the most corrupt member of a corrupt political school. Like Robert Walpole, though even more definitely, he represented

[1] Creasy, *Eminent Etonians*, p. 276 ff.

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the powers of plutocratic absolutism, of government by means of corruption ruthlessly and sytematically carried on.

Of Pitt's other school friends we may mention Charles Hanbury-Williams,[1] who was the English Ambassador in St. Petersburg at the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. He was born in 1709, and was the son of John Hanbury, the Director of the South Sea Company. His second name, Williams, was adopted from his godfather Charles Williams of Caerleon when he became his heir. When he had finished his education, and had spent the usual time in travel, he was elected to Parliament for the County of Monmouth, joined Robert Walpole, and became Paymaster to the Navy. His hospitable house, his talents as host, and some small poetic gift, made him a general favourite. His mission to St. Petersburg was his ruin. It was destined to failure, for when Frederick the Great had drawn the sword there was no possibility of restraining the Russian advance, but after his recall Hanbury took the matter so much to heart that he became imbecile and died in 1759, a victim to the forward policy of the great king. Pitt's relations with him became rather those of opposition, although they had been friends at Eton. At the outset Hanbury belonged, as an adherent of Walpole, to Pitt's opponents, and was finally removed by Pitt from his office.

Finally, mention may be made of the author Henry Fielding,[2] who is said to have been one of Pitt's friends. It is possible that Pitt's literary taste was determined by Fielding's extraordinary love of Greek and Latin authors, and especially of Homer.

Pitt left Eton in 1726 on the conclusion of his school studies, and spent the summer and autumn at Stratford. It was not until the winter that he entered the University of Oxford. His autograph note of entry,[3] which gives us most important personal information, is dated January 10, 1726-7,

[1] Creasy, *Eminent Etonians*, p. 279 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 281 ff.

[3] 'Ego Guilelmus Pitt Filius Robti Pitt armi: de Old Sarum in comitatu Wilts, natus Londini in Par: Sancti Jacobi annorum circiter octodecim, admissus sum primi ordinis commensalis sub tutamine magri Stockwell, Janrii decimo die anno Domini 1726.' Printed in Thackeray, i. p. 3, note. In accordance with this note, the date of entry at Oxford has been simply given in other works as 1726, whereas our chronology places it in 1727, as the English year then began in March. Thackeray has also failed to observe this fact.

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an unusual time of entry, as the first term of the University year was already past. It is probable that the boy required an unusually long rest at home after his hard life at Eton. He then proceeded to Oxford to complete his education, the ancient and strongly High Church University, where the Test Act, *i.e.* subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, was enforced upon undergraduates until late in the nineteenth century. He entered Trinity College as a gentleman commoner. He must have found his life somewhat lonely in comparison with Eton; none of his relations were in residence, and his more intimate friends had gone in other directions. Richard Grenville was abroad; Pratt and George Grenville had entered the Inner Temple at London; Fox had left Oxford in 1724; Hanbury was not in residence, and Fielding had gone to Leyden. Only his friend Lyttelton was up, but he was at Christ Church. No doubt Pitt found society enough at Oxford, but none that could replace the close associations of his school life, owing to the different constitution of the society in which he now found himself. Moreover, his continual physical weakness must have proved a material obstacle to the formation of friendships. Then, as now, athletics formed one of the principal occupations of the undergraduate members, and a man wholly excluded from participation in these was likely to be somewhat isolated. We know of no friendship made during his University career, whence we may at least conclude that what friends he made were of no importance in his future life. With the exception of Lyttelton his only contemporaries known to us were the Scotsman William Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield, with whom his later relations were none of the pleasantest, as will be seen in due course, and Robert Henley, afterwards Earl of Northington and Lord Chancellor of England; his association with the latter seems to have been somewhat closer, and his elevation to office was afterwards due to Pitt.[1]

The years preceding and subsequent to this change of residence were a sad time for William; in rapid succession he had to lament the loss of two grandmothers, his grandfather, and his father, who, though at variance between themselves, had never been estranged from him. Lady Grandison died at the beginning of January 1725-6, the Governor, Thomas Pitt, in

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

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April 1726, and his father, Robert Pitt, in May 1727. These heavy losses, to which have to be added the deaths of his uncle and his aunt Stanhope, must have exercised a very saddening influence. He was at an age which could fully appreciate the significance of such events, and had not lost its natural warmth of feeling; when death had made such gaps in the family circle he must have felt isolated indeed. Nor did this loss bring any material improvement in his affairs. His share of his grandfather's property brought him an income of £200 a year; this was no doubt a help at the outset, but could give no freedom from financial anxiety.[1] His father left him nothing, either because he owned no personal property and wished to leave the estates united, or under the very reasonable idea that the grandfather had already provided for the grandsons in his will, and that any further bequests would be a departure from his wishes. Thomas, as a matter of fact, had left bequests to every grandchild as well as to his sons and daughters. William's income began from his twenty-first birthday, and until then he was dependent upon his father or guardian, but the expenses of his University career almost equalled his income. Robert calculated these expenses as amounting in general to £150 to 200 a year,[2] a sum on which one might just live as a gentleman.

As regards Pitt's choice of studies, these were limited for the most part to classical philology and history,[3] which were the principal branches of learning in the strict humanism for which Oxford education was noted. Apart from this we have no certain information upon his studies. Some of his letters, and especially those to his nephew Thomas,[4] in which he gives advice upon a rational course of study, enable us to draw some conclusions as to what line he himself may have pursued at Oxford.[5]

[1] All books give his income as £100, and a letter from Robert to his son Thomas, announcing the Governor's death, states that William had received £100. On the other hand, the will printed in Hedges, iii. 163 ff., shows the income to be £200 from the twenty-first birthday, and this is in better correspondence with the other bequests and annuities. William would have been most unfairly treated by a bequest of only £100, and, in view of his grandfather's favour towards him, such a bequest is very improbable.

[2] Dropmore MSS., p. 84. [3] Thackeray, p. 3.

[4] *Chatham Correspondence*, i., the first letter, p. 56.

[5] He writes to Thomas: 'Give me leave, if I have had any little successes in the world, to guide you to what I have drawn many helps from.'—*Chatham Correspondence*, i. 66.

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That he was actually occupied with all the various departments of learning which he recommended to his nephew may be taken as certain, but many of these studies were probably not begun until later, when he had recognised and was attempting to supply the deficiencies of his knowledge. At the same time efforts in this direction must have been begun comparatively early, and considerably before his entry into the ministry, for his letters to his nephew begin in 1751. Thus for our purposes it is a matter of comparative indifference whether he acquired his knowledge at Oxford or independently at a later period. All that we wish to know is the source from which he generally drew his knowledge, and the intellectual influences which modified his character, in order that we may get some basis for understanding his modes of thought and action. An investigation of this nature is best begun while we are considering his Oxford career, for it was there no doubt that Pitt was chiefly and more exclusively occupied with these matters. And first we must observe that it was no course of study which determined his social and political career. This was dictated by his own character, by native inclinations, and by the capacity which he felt himself to possess. He could not help striving for moral completeness and political predominance under all circumstances; any other course of action would have been foreign to his nature. The studies with which he was occupied were to him the means of support for his efforts and the weapons which facilitated his success. In them he found indications for realising himself and reaching the goal which his character set before him. Hence his studies could never be purely dispassionate or absolutely scientific. He preferred those works which best met his needs and confined his attention to such parts of them as he required. The result was naturally a manifold influence upon his character and his mode of action.

His studies were chiefly concentrated upon three branches of learning, and in every case for purposes chiefly practical. He wished to perfect himself in knowledge of the world, political wisdom, and the art of oratory. His object in the first case was to secure mental balance and emotional command throughout his struggles for the highest earthly aims. The second branch of study was to provide him with the intellectual material which he needed for the

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attainment of his object, while the third was intended to give him that technical perfection without which all other knowledge would be useless.

We proceed, then to examine first of all his attempts to gain worldly experience. He recognised that the use of immoral means was contrary to his character, and would not only cause him unhappiness, but weaken his powers. The great poets of antiquity, Homer and Virgil, for whom, as poets, he showed a strong preference, provided him with notable examples of achievements performed by purely moral means. He readily appropriated their teaching of honour, courage, unselfishness, the love of truth, distinction of behaviour, and humanity,[1] and intended to follow this instruction in his political career. Similar benefits were gained apart from the æsthetic pleasure provided by the reading of other ancient and modern poets, Horace and Terence, Molière and Addison; the moral essays of the latter[2] were especially suitable to his purpose by reason of the Christian feeling with which they were inspired. Cicero's popular philosophical essays, *de Officiis*, *de Amicitia*, *de Senectute*, provided him with hints for securing mental equipoise and for avoiding the many reefs and shoals of life, though they could not give him the securer foundation afforded only by Christian doctrine. Of the philosophers of antiquity, properly so called, he displayed a characteristic preference for the Socratic school and Euclid with his teaching of the unity of existence based upon the principles of good. Of modern philosophers he preferred John Locke, whose treatise upon the Human Understanding, which in some degree is known to have paved the way for Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, was specially recommended by him for study, and must therefore have been a favourite. If inducements to read Locke were necessary they may have been provided by family relationship. A patron of the philosopher to whom he dedicated that most famous of his works, 'under the greatest obligations to acknowledge a long train of favours received,' was Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, a liberal Tory who had held the highest offices. Pitt's family had been for a long time on terms of acquaintanceship, if not of intimacy, with the Pembroke

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 62.

[2] Pitt especially recommended the constant reading of these.—*Chatham Correspondence*, i. 68.

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family. In the year 1711 we hear of the little Thomas as a visitor at Pembroke's house,[1] and in the letters of the Countess of Suffolk and of the Duchess of Queensberry to Pitt's sister Anna we hear of Lord Pembroke and his daughter Lady Margaret Herbert as being close friends of Anna.[2] By whatever means Pitt was introduced to the works of Locke they must have proved congenial to his mind, as will afterwards appear. Pitt seems also to have shown some interest in experimental philosophy.

For the knowledge of political science, which was both necessary and serviceable to the intending statesman, Pitt applied himself to the study of historians and writers upon constitutional theory; of these John Locke was again the most prominent. In this instance also it cannot be said that Pitt's views were borrowed from Locke or that the philosopher led him into the paths which he afterwards followed. The truth is rather that in Locke's writings Pitt found those political theories which were natural to his genius and consistent with his desires suitably formulated and philosophically justified. Locke is the philosopher of the Revolution of 1688; in his treatise upon Government he elaborated a scientific foundation and a philosophical justification for the events that had taken place, while at the same time attempting to shield the reigning dynasty from their repetition. He arrived at this conclusion by means of his theory of the original freedom of all men, and of their voluntary but irrevocable resolution to submit to governmental rule, government being a contractual obligation between prince and people which only held good while the conditions under which it was formulated were observed. He showed that under certain conditions this contract might be declared null and void by the nation, which in such a case was justified in setting up a new government; but the possibility of such an event was so beset with counteracting clauses, that while Locke's theory justified the events of 1688 it was applicable to no other occurrence of the kind. This was exactly what Pitt required. He felt that his talents could only be developed freely and successfully upon the basis provided by the glorious Revolution, and that the oratorical powers, which he knew himself to possess and was working to develop, gave him an advantage over his rivals only upon the

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 50. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 92 f. and 97.

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condition that the constitutional power lay in the hands of a great assembly which he might convert to his views. Hence throughout his life he emphasises and develops the Whig principles as formulated in 1689. But at the same time his connection with the dominant aristocracy, and his relations with the court, of which we shall afterwards speak, made him desirous of seeing the new government protected against any revolutionary change. He did not wish a Tory majority to use the inalienable rights of the nation for the restoration of the old state of affairs, and thus to remove the second basis upon which he meant to rise to political importance. He felt the inconsistency upon which the Whig party was founded, namely, that the party, while representative of national right, gained its chief support from the monarchy, and Locke's theories seemed to him to provide an excellent solution of the difficulty.

They were not, however, a wholly adequate solution, and to supply the deficiency he turned to another writer upon constitutional theory, who was at the same time an eminent statesman. This was Lord Bolingbroke, whose writings aroused the liveliest interest in Pitt, as they showed him a means of harmonising Royalist and Whig principles. There is, however, no doubt that this development of Pitt's political ideas belonged to a later date, for the most important of the works in question did not appear until 1737, and may therefore be reserved for later consideration.

A necessary preliminary to successful statesmanship seemed to Pitt to be that study of history which he had begun at Oxford and zealously continued afterwards. If we may suppose that he himself practised the course he advised his nephew to follow, he began by securing a definite knowledge of events in their chronological order, of lists of kings, etc., and then proceeded to work through more detailed histories of the periods studied. Of the ancient historians he seems to have preferred Plutarch, whom he considered specially instructive,[1] Livy and Sallust, and from these writers he gained his ideas of Roman greatness. The history of ancient Rome seemed to him, to use his later expression,[2] the apostolic age of patriotism, and an age unique for its completeness in this respect. The title of Roman seemed to him the highest praise

[1] Seward, *Anecdotes*, iii. 394. [2] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 187.

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which could be given to man. Of English historians he studied Gilbert Burnet's *History of the English Reformation*—of its unreliability he was well aware—and Thomas May's *History of the Long Parliament*, which was marked by a tone of moderation. Lord Clarendon's great *History of the Rebellion* pleased him less by reason of its Royalist tendencies. Apart from this we may mention Welwood's *Memoirs*, which give a critical account of the hundred years before the Revolution of 1688, and Ludlow's *Memoirs*, which detailed Cromwell's policy in Ireland. These are the objects of study of which we hear in Pitt's letters, and which must therefore have made the greatest impression upon him. They naturally do not exclude a more extended knowledge of historical literature. However, this study was made subservient to his political ideas, and he extracted from it only what he required, as is seen from the fact that a prominent place, indeed almost the only place, is given to works based 'upon the true principles of our admirable constitution.'[1] He did not propose to evolve a political theory from these works, but to find in them the historical justification of the theories he had already formed.

We now come to the third branch of his literary studies, that of rhetorical education, and in view of the high importance of oratorical power to Pitt's life and work, a few words must be devoted to the position occupied by oratory in political life. Without some such explanation later assertions in this work may easily become unintelligible.

A political speech, in the strict sense of the word, which is something more than a mere piece of rhetoric produced upon a special occasion, must always keep one object in view, that of exciting other persons to political action. The orator may wish to gain a special vote, to secure suffrages or to evoke from his hearers repeated confirmations of the policy he defends, and so to produce a modification of public opinion; but in any case his efforts are meant to rouse actual political action on the part of other people. His intention is to make others subserve his own ends, to strengthen his own scanty forces by means of the power that others possess, and this, whatever the character of his efforts, be they selfish or unselfish, be they directed to securing the advantage of an

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 67.

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individual, of a party, or of the state. A political speech is distinguished from a pamphlet, from expert advice, from a memorial or a dissertation, by the special fact that it seeks to bring about a comparatively rapid result, and to prevent a close and detailed examination of the subject under discussion. Vigorous, attractive, and even sweeping language, followed by a decision as rapid as possible before the flame of enthusiasm dies away, such is the course of events invariably most desirable to the great orator. This definition does not imply that oratory pursues some reprehensible or perverted aim which cannot stand strict investigation. The consent of the masses can by this means be extorted to the most desirable and the most moral measures, and brilliant oratory is particularly valuable in cases where courage must be inspired. Moreover, the intellectual constitution of an assembly necessitates a procedure of this nature. A crowd of people is in most cases disinclined, and little competent to undertake, an accurate examination of the questions at issue, and the more incompetent it is the greater will be the influence exerted upon it by clever oratory. Where the influence of oratory is supreme we have to suppose a general decay of intellectual force, or an unsound extension of democratic principles throughout the state. When this is the case despotism is usually not far distant, whether it appears openly or lurks behind the scenes.

To my thinking, the greatest danger of oratory consists in the fact that it forms an intellectual weapon, the efficacy of which is in no way dependent upon the purity of the aims pursued. Egoist, party leader and patriot, all can use this weapon with equal success. If the compelling power of enthusiastic conviction gives one side an advantage, effrontery and falsehood can enable the opposition to restore the balance. A further element of evil lies in the fact that the keen desire of holding his audience leads the orator to abandon a clear and unprejudiced point of view, and makes less demand upon his knowledge of fact, whereas written exposition makes the greatest possible demand upon such knowledge. I have never been able to understand why a statesman of the character most chiefly in demand in republics, is bound to be a great orator. In fact, this necessity seems to me to be a great constitutional mistake, for the reason that several outstand-

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ing capacities are but rarely united in one and the same person. At the present day parliamentary orators as such are of infinitely less importance. The government representatives, who borrow many a suggestion and idea from them, are not amenable to oratorical persuasions, and cannot be carried away by eloquence. The members of Parliament follow their party leaders, who have previously examined every question, and found a solution in accordance with the interests of the party. In their case again fine oratory is purposeless. On the other hand, speeches are now published and made accessible to the nation at large, a circumstance which makes the orator more careful of the nature of his assertions. Speeches thus become rather of the character of spoken pamphlets or electioneering addresses; they are intended to make proselytes in the nation and to secure suffrages, to show the efforts of the party as serving the national interests and the general welfare. Thus the real art of oratory, the personal influence upon an audience, and the power to compel and inspire enthusiasm, loses all its importance, for the reason that the masses for whom this art is intended are not present. It is indeed still employed, but more from personal inclination or a certain pride, and without any expectation of definite result.

Things were very different in England at Pitt's time. The publication of debates was strictly forbidden,[1] and speeches therefore could not be intended for the nation at large, to whom indeed they could only become known by hearsay. On the other hand, the members of Parliament were far more independent than at the present day; provided that they were not bribed or maintained in pecuniary dependence upon aristocratical leaders, they were able to vote as they pleased. A general examination of a voter's action rarely took place, owing to the long duration of parliamentary sessions, and there was no voluntary union of parties and no vigorous party discipline. As we have already observed, the number of dependent members was very large, but even in their cases secession was not impossible; to these facts must be added the circumstance that the intellectual level of Parliament was very low as compared with its present height, and no such total indifference to rhetorical performance then existed as now

[1] Resolution of the House of Commons, February 26, 1729.—Mahon, *History of England*, ii. 133.

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prevails. Hence at that time existing conditions were favourable to successful orators; a famous orator, indeed, could not expect to dominate Parliament merely by his art, for without the support of leaders with influence upon a following he might be outvoted. But at the same time he was a political factor to be reckoned with, a valuable friend and an inconvenient enemy. As such, his importance would rapidly increase if Parliament gradually rose above the abasement of corruption, an object which Pitt persistently kept in view.

Thus Pitt, boasting neither riches nor personal following, strove to develop his fine talents to the utmost. Great powers of penetration and a comprehensive sweep of vision did not belong to him, nor are these essentials of oratorical art, but he secured control of the weapons with which he was able to make his way to power. This way was somewhat foul, and Pitt did not pass over it unstained, but no other was possible with the means at his disposal.

It was by the study of the most important masters that he endeavoured to train himself for oratory. From the logic of Aristotle he learned, as he afterwards declared,[1] that clear mode of exposition which distinguished his speeches. His studies were also concentrated upon the mighty warnings and exhortations of Demosthenes and the elaborate and carefully prepared senatorial speeches of Cicero.[2] From them he learned the use of pathos and the oratorical dexterity which he afterwards employed with great success. Of modern writers he is said to have shown special respect for Bolingbroke, whose earlier writings he now seems to have read for the sake of their form, and for Dr. Barrow the mathematician and theologian, the teacher of Newton. He is said to have read Barrow's *Sermons* so often as to have known them by heart, and to have studied a large dictionary from beginning to end to gain a rich vocabulary.[3] Whether these stories are true or false, they show us that Pitt was reputed among his contemporaries to have worked unusually hard to develop his oratorical powers. Valuable also as intellectual training was, no doubt, the practice of Latin verse, which he must have

[1] Creasy, *Eminent Etonians*, p. 212.

[2] In a later letter of Algarotti to Pitt, special emphasis is laid upon this study. —*Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 202.

[3] Charles Butler, *Reminiscences*, i. 139. London, 1824.

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followed at Eton, however unpoetical his productions. A poem in laudation of King George I., composed upon his death, is handed down to us from his early Oxford days;[1] this is naturally not to be regarded as the clumsy piece of servility which it appears to be, but rather as an exercise composed upon a special event. It was a prize-poem written for a competition in which Pitt was defeated by William Murray,[2] a rivalry which was the prelude to many more important struggles between these two men. The poem provides us with no information upon Pitt's political views, although Royalist tendencies must have been strong in the high-church Oxford of those days.

Pitt did not conclude his studies by taking the usual degree of Bachelor of Arts. The gout is said to have caused his premature departure from the University.[3] A significant reason for that event is, however, hinted at in his letters to the young Thomas. His emphatic warnings against extravagance and self-indulgence are indeed not surprising in the mouth of a prudent uncle. Thomas, he writes in 1754, was to inscribe upon the curtains of his bed and the walls of his room the words '*Vitanda est improba siren Desidia*';[4] another passage, however, speaks even more clearly. On April 9, 1755, he writes to the same youth:[5] 'My own travels at present are none of the pleasantest; I am going through a fit of the gout with much proper pain and with what proper patience I may. *Avis au lecteur*, my sweet boy: remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth: let no excesses lay the foundations of gout and the rest of Pandora's box; nor any immoralities or vicious courses sow the seeds of a too late and painful repentance. Here ends my sermon; which I trust you are not fine gentleman enough, or in plain English, silly fellow enough, to laugh at.' Here he unmistakably brings the gout and his own gout into primary connection with immorality and excess.[6] He certainly felt

[1] Printed in Thackeray, i. 4 f.

[2] See *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. William Murray.

[3] Thackeray, i. 5. He himself refers to, if he does not openly assert, the sudden interruption of his education: 'or stopped short in the generous pursuit.'—*Chatham Correspondence*, i. 82.

[4] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 65. [5] *Ibid.*, i. 118.

[6] Elsewhere, again, he writes to Thomas: 'Give me leave . . . to guard you against such things as I experience my own defects to arise from,' an observa-

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himself guilty of such action. And not only had he given way to these temptations, weakness which in early youth is easy and to some extent excusable,[1] but he had seriously damaged his health in consequence. The gout cannot indeed have arisen from excesses of this kind, but as it was present in his constitution its development might have been unduly stimulated. He himself obviously believes this to have been the case, and his repeated complaints of the lack of advice and guidance which he suffered in his youth are to be regarded as so many attempts at excuses and as a kind of advertisement for the value of his counsels to his nephew.[2] Whether by the expression 'the rest of Pandora's box' he meant to hint at evils, other youthful indiscretions, the consequences of which he carried through life, must remain uncertain. In any case it is sign of his great intimacy with his nephew that he should allow him so deep a glance into his past, though at the same time he felt it necessary to warn him against ridiculing his advice: only a 'silly fellow,' he says, would sneer at it; his expression might refer to his words of advice, but certainly has special reference to his revelations, for in other cases the high taste of his letters does not permit such severity of expression. It is indeed not proved that the indiscretions to which he refers took place in his Oxford days; they might have been committed during his continental travels or at Court, but as he left Oxford on account of illness and travelled for the purpose of restoring his health, the first assumption is the most probable. Apart from this he warns a student of the dangers to which his age would be most prone.

Concerning the date of his departure from the University we have no information. As the first examination was usually passed after three years' residence, Pitt, who did not reach this point, must have broken off his studies in 1728-9. It was certainly with no feelings of exultation that he went out into

tion only explicable in conjunction with the above quotation.—*Chatham Correspondence*, i. 66.

[1] Robert Henley either contracted or intensified gouty tendencies in Oxford by excessive drinking. See *Dictionary of National Biography*.

[2] In a letter of February 3, 1754, he emphasises the advantage to be derived from the advice of experienced counsellors, 'how to avoid the inconveniences, dangers, and evils which they themselves may have run upon for want of such timely warnings.'—*Chatham Correspondence*, i. 81 f. Who can doubt that Pitt was here thinking of his own case?

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the world upon a progress which we have now to follow. He had lost many of his nearest relations, he had no definite result from years of work, he was ill and miserable and perhaps not free from self-reproach. These were not favourable auspices with which to commence the work of life. His first task was to recover his health and courage, and his immediate measures were taken to secure this object.

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CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION TO LIFE

Foreign travel was then fashionable in England among those who possessed the means. Such travel was supposed to open the mind, to advance artistic taste, to increase powers of diplomacy and statesmanship, and also of generalship in time of war, although in the majority of cases pleasure was the sole object. The poet Thomson, who travelled through France and Italy, blames the exaggeration of the custom, and asserts with truth that the money thus spent would be better invested in the importation of real talents, artists, architects, etc., than in enabling a crowd of ignoramuses to stand helplessly gaping in front of their works.[1] Young men of distinguished families habitually concluded their studies with a continental tour, from which, according to their character, they either derived valuable experience or returned home with empty purses and impaired health. The travels of the young Thomas Pitt,[2] William's elder brother, seem to have belonged to this latter category. A youth who was unable to live upon £700 a year on the Continent, where the expense of living was much lower than in England, certainly did not devote himself exclusively to study. It was also remarkable that after travelling through the Netherlands he should remain at Lunéville for the whole winter of 1726-7; this town was the residence of the Duke of Lorraine and possessed an Academy; but, as George Lyttelton informs us,[3] it was a centre of unintellectual and extravagant life and of English society of the lower sort. Thomas was recalled from France in May 1727 by the death of his father, Robert Pitt. Of other young men who made the tour at this

[1] *Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons*, ed. Seward, ii. 381 ff. London, 1798.
[2] Cp. Dropmore MSS., p. 76 ff.
[3] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 34 ff.

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time, we may mention Henry Hyde, Viscount Cornbury,[1] who was afterwards on terms of friendship with William Pitt. As a Tory and a son of the last Earl of Clarendon, he fell under the perhaps not unfounded suspicion of frequenting the society of the Pretender. He came home in 1732. George Lyttelton's travels deserve, however, special mention; for his letters[2] give a general picture of the nature of these tours which must be valuable to us, since we know practically nothing of Pitt's own travels. Moreover, we cannot be wholly indifferent to Lyttelton's career in view of the great influence he exercised upon Pitt.

Lyttelton began his journey at the outset of 1728. He was at first alone, but from Lyons onward he is stated to have accompanied the son of Sir William Wyndham, who is probably identical with the later Secretary of State, Lord Egremont, though this may have been the brother, Earl Thomond. The journey must have been continued in common as far as Venice, for at this point we have our last mention of him. The traveller proceeded, in accordance with his father's instructions, without the usual lengthy stay in the Netherlands, directly to Lunéville, where George, like Thomas Pitt, attended the Academy and appeared at Court. There the frivolous life and the superficial society proved repugnant to his idealistic nature, although he took an active part in the demoralising game of hazard, at which he lost much money. He was then glad to be taken away on diplomatic business by Mr. Poyntz, the English representative at the Congress of Soissons. He went to the scene of the Congress, where a discussion took place between England, France, Spain, and the Emperor upon the regulation of Italian affairs. From that town he visited Compiègne and Paris. Thus the journey proved of real value to him, and the opinion of George expressed by Poyntz in his letters to his father was wholly favourable, although he recognised that George's inclination to poetry would impede his full development as a statesman. The letters of Lyttelton himself testify to his keen insight, and his judgment of French affairs is in every case accurate.

In October 1728 he then proceeded by way of Lyons to Geneva, a town of special interest to Englishmen as the

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography.*
[2] *The Works of George, Lord Lyttelton*, ed. Ayscough, p. 661 ff. London, 1774.

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cradle of the Reformed Faith, and to Turin and Genoa over one of the Alpine passes. Wherever he went he made important acquaintances, as he had the best of introductions. He passed through Milan to Venice, where he made his longest stay, remaining there nearly fifteen months. It was not until the spring of 1731 that he reached Rome, and after a stay of several weeks he returned to France with comparative rapidity through Florence, Genoa, and Marseilles, and so home.

There is no doubt that Pitt took no share in this tour, although the friendship existing between himself and Lyttelton must have made the possibility of his companionship very close. If he had joined in the tour it is certain that Lyttelton would have mentioned his presence in his letters to his father, as he did in the case of young Wyndham. These same letters make it probable that Pitt remained in England for several months after Lyttelton's departure, for the writer speaks of him without mentioning his travels. There exists, in fact, no certain proof that Pitt ever undertook such a tour; we have no direct information upon it, and the simple fact that he visited France and Italy is asserted only by secondary authority in the first biography written after his death. Our only piece of direct evidence is derived from a speech in the House of Commons. In this oration, delivered on November 13, 1755, he compared the coalition between Henry Fox and the Duke of Newcastle with the confluence of the Rhone and the Saone at Lyons, which he had himself seen. A halting-place in the course of his tour is thus established, which makes it probable that he passed through France, and also visited Italy, for Lyons was the usual starting-point for Geneva and the Alpine passes, and also for Marseilles for the voyage by sea to Upper Italy. But it is not absolutely necessary that Pitt should have made a continental tour in these particular years; he might have found time for the purpose at a later date. As, however, existing tradition on the point could hardly have arisen spontaneously, while there are no contradictory facts before us, and his own reference can hardly be otherwise interpreted, we may assume with some degree of certainty that upon leaving Oxford he undertook a similar tour to that made by George Lyttelton.

For what reason did these two friends travel abroad almost

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simultaneously and yet apart? In my opinion, the question may be answered by consideration of the different objects of their tours and of the different means at their command. Lyttelton undertook an educational tour. He was to attend the Academy in Lunéville, and he availed himself of the opportunity to extend his diplomatic knowledge and experience. Pitt, on the other hand, intended to travel for purposes of health. In his case, over-exertion and excitement were to be avoided, and a temperate course of life to be pursued. Lyttelton's first place of residence, the lively town of Lunéville, where Thomas Pitt had misspent his time shortly before, would have been most unsuitable for William. Hence his participation in Lyttelton's tour was precluded from the outset. A further point was the scantiness of Pitt's pecuniary resources. Lyttelton was well provided with bills of exchange, travelled like a rich young Englishman, shared in the amusements, and frequented the leading society of the districts through which he passed. Pitt had an income of only £200 a year, and would probably not have undertaken any tour if reasons of health had not made a journey necessary. Hence in order to carry out his plan he was obliged to live sparingly and avoid all unnecessary expense. We cannot suppose that he had any money for his travels beyond his own income with the exception of a few isolated gifts; his brother Thomas had nothing to spare for him, but was soon himself heavily in debt, and he could not as yet have secured the favour of any patron. This conclusion is supported by the fact that Pitt made no important acquaintances upon the Continent, so far as we know, and that tradition is practically silent concerning his tour. It was, in fact, a tour undertaken merely for purposes of health, and was thus comparatively unimportant as regards its influence upon his political career. No doubt his health benefited from it, although his gout was not definitely cured. Had he not partially recovered, he could not have entered military service immediately upon his return. It is impossible to conceive the dignified and gouty statesman of later years as a cavalry officer if we do not assume that he enjoyed comparatively good health at this period of his life. Absolutely without influence upon his political career this journey cannot have been. In particular his stay in Paris, in the course of which he gained some first-

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hand acquaintance with French affairs, must have been of value to him later, and equally so the slight insight which he gained into the intriguing life of Turin. This was the basis of what was later to be a valuable source of diplomatic information.

He must have returned to England in 1731, as is seen from the fact that he entered upon his new duties in February 1731-2; his position was then far from brilliant. Though the main object of his journey had been attained and his health had, temporarily at least, been restored, he had as yet entered upon no career suitable to his rank, and certainly upon none which would enable him to rise to a leading position. His studies had not been completed; his financial resources were but scanty, and were probably somewhat embarrassed by the expense of his tour. He lacked, moreover, his father's support, an advantage not easily compensated in any case, and certainly not by the help of such a brother as Thomas. His relations with the Temple group then proved valuable; these, as we have seen, were begun through the good offices of his friend George Lyttelton, and also through Thomas Pitt, who had married George's sister in 1728. Pitt himself seems to have preferred another sister, for, in a letter to his father, George regrets the fact that William Pitt's means were not as great as those of his brother, as in that case 'one might have presented him with my pretty little M.'[1] The brother and a friend may have agreed to help William, and to find him some kind of position which would relieve him of financial anxiety, and provide him with some future prospect. Appeal was then made to the influential uncle Cobham to secure the realisation of these desires.

Sir Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham since 1718,[2] was born about the year 1669, and was, therefore, some sixty years of age. He had entered the army at an early age, fought in the war of the Spanish Succession under Marlborough, and risen to the rank of Lieutenant-General. Being a Whig he had been deprived of his position by subsequent changes of party, but had afterwards risen to an even higher position under the Hanoverian dynasty. He became a member of the Privy Council, a commander of the

[1] *The Works of Lyttelton*, Continental Letters, June 8, 1728.
[2] Cp. *Dictionary of National Biography*.

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Royal Horse Life Guards, after a successful expedition to Spain, the Controller of the Army Administration and also the nominal governor of Jersey. Our information does not display him as a personality of special distinction.[1] He was a capable officer and man of business, but he was haughty, inclined to partisanship, with no inherent capacity for politics, and not wholly straightforward. He had a fancy for playing the part of Mæcenas, and for patronising young politicians, not so much from goodness of heart or patriotism or from expert knowledge, as from the desire to see himself respected and flattered.

When Pitt returned from the Continent Cobham was in full possession of all the above-mentioned offices and honours. There were, no doubt, a large number of posts which he might procure for candidates even if they were not absolutely at his own disposal. Hence it is somewhat surprising that he should have chosen a military post for the *protégé* of his relatives, and have appointed Pitt to a cornetcy in his regiment of Life Guards. From this fact we may infer the nature of the impression made by Pitt upon those with whom he came in contact. His coolness of temperament, his energy, his self-possession, qualities strongly obvious in his political career, were now most prominent, while his intellectual powers and penetration had not reached their full development either at school, at the University, or even now. Pitt, moreover, from his youth up laid great stress upon good manners, distinction of bearing, and precision in dress.[2] He devoted great attention to these externals when he was minister. These facts co-operated to present him as a suitable candidate for a commission in the Guards, and by the offer of such a commission in his own regiment Cobham was able most quickly and simply to solve the problem of his difficulties. As he knew practically nothing about Pitt, it was a favour from him to his relations, and nothing more. When Robert Pitt on a former occasion bought a captain's commission for his brother he was obliged to pay no less than

[1] The estimate of his character in Lord Shelburne's autobiography (Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, i. 72; London, 1875) may be somewhat severe, but is not materially incorrect.

[2] Cp. Seward, *Anecdotes*, ii. 399. Pitt emphasises the importance of these matters to his nephew in *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 79.

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£1200, a transaction which the old Thomas regarded as a bad stroke of business, and an unpractical investment of capital,[1] a curious view of the situation to our thinking. In William's case no mention is made of any such payment, and possibly the chief advantage gained from Cobham's interest was the passing over of this necessity of purchase, which would have been a heavy burden upon the youth's narrow means.

Thus, on February 9, 1731-2, Pitt received his commission as cornet in the 'King's Own Regiment of Horse,' also known as 'Lord Cobham's Horse,' or briefly as 'The Blues.'[2] It was a highly distinguished dragoon regiment, the officers of which belonged to the best families, and membership of which afforded the best prospect of rapid advancement. Pitt seems to have found the prospect to his liking. Like his uncle John Pitt, he showed himself determined to devote his life to the military profession. It was characteristic of Pitt, that while he lacked that broad general knowledge necessary to a statesman, he was yet able with extreme rapidity to acquire all necessary information upon any subject with which he had to deal.[3] He was not a character of creative originality, and could not indeed become one by these methods, but he was able to accommodate himself to any circumstances. Accordingly he now devoted himself to the study of military literature. He afterwards told Lord Shelburne[4] that there was no book on military topics which he had not read through. He also applied himself seriously to the study of his profession, although the requirements of the service at that time cannot have claimed his full powers. He was anxious to reach a position of high command. Such a post might then be very quickly attained under special circumstances and with good connections. No doubt he would have secured his ambition if General Cobham had remained in favour, or if he had been able to resolve upon secession from his patron's party. He himself afterwards related that Sir Robert Walpole had

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 31 f.

[2] Thackeray, i. 6; *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 194; *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

[3] Mr. Cummins, a well-known American Quaker, said afterwards of him: 'When I first meet Mr. Pitt upon business, I find him totally ignorant; on our second meeting, I find him in possession of full information' (Seward, *Anecdotes*, ii. 395). The fact seemed more remarkable to the Quaker than it really was, as he knew nothing of the sources of information at a statesman's disposal.

[4] Fitzmaurice, i. 73.

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offered him an important and remunerative post upon the latter condition.

His mind, however, was busy at this time with other matters than the military profession. This is proved by an essay of his composition, which appeared in the *London Journal* in 1733. It is entitled, 'Letter on Superstition, addressed to the People of England,' and its object is nothing less than a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole fabric of religious doctrine and worship. It was certainly composed under the influence, and possibly with the help, of the freethinking Lord Cobham and his literary acquaintances, though its form and mode of argument clearly betray Pitt's hand. With the certainty and infallibility of inexperienced youth, posing as the representative of a new era of enlightenment, Pitt developed his arguments with no great care for the stability of their foundations; at the same time the pamphlet shows powers of penetration, if not of deep thought, and that capacity for dialectic which he was afterwards to employ in his speeches with great success. From cleverly formulated, though untrue or half-true hypotheses, he develops the specious conclusions which were to impress the mind of the uneducated or half-educated readers whom he was addressing. It seems worth our while to give an abstract of the argument, if only for the light it throws upon the state of religious affairs in England at that time.

He begins with the general assertion that every religious system has merely increased men's burdens instead of improving their actions or abolishing their defects. This is the impression made upon him by the morality of his environment, which conjoins a strict observance of ecclesiastical forms to crass worldliness of life. He asks for the reason of this inconsistency, and he finds an answer in the fact that religion has given, and indeed recommended to mankind, a means of relief from the burden of sin by repentance, ceremonial penance, etc., instead of making abstention from sin a cardinal point, either by demonstrating the happiness resulting from such abstention, or by pictures of recompense beyond the grave. The distorted doctrine that man is by nature sinful and incapable of avoiding sin has given the strongest impetus to the progress of sin. Religion, he vigorously insists, is virtue and not faith, for virtue can be demanded, but faith depends

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upon the human will, and cannot be imposed from without. To reward faith and to punish unbelief is unjust and immoral. But worse than all else is the imposition of a faith excusing and compensating the burden of sin, for this has made mankind more sinful than all human passions put together. Somewhat inconsistent with this is his assertion that believers would regard sinfulness as far more practically valuable than virtue were it not for the thought of an after-life, for he had previously observed that faith takes away the dangerous power of sin. In conclusion, he stigmatises the religious animosity and intolerance which characterise existing religion, and proclaims humanitarianism as the only divine teaching.

No doubt a certain amount of truth is at the bottom of this argument, and the fact that Pitt had been led to this conclusion shows in what manner divine service was conducted by the Church authorities and how little understanding of the real nature of faith it was able to arouse. The assertion is correct that Protestantism does not always sufficiently assert the duty of morality, or lay sufficient emphasis upon it in relation to faith; at the same time the doctrine is not wholly false that only faith has atoning power, for without some honest effort to put away sin faith is not to be attained, while the right kind of faith naturally produces an increase of morality which can never be brought about by mere intellectual conviction or by the expectation of reward. As regards result, the most intellectual humanitarianism can never compete with the love of a Divine Redeemer. If faith indeed be regarded merely as a guarantee which has been set up by authority, and can be overthrown by authority, then Pitt's conclusions are inevitable. But faith is much rather a work of personal struggle and experience, an unshakable conviction on behalf of which its possessor is ready to suffer and to die; such faith can never promote immorality, or even allow its possessor to mark time upon the road of salvation.

We shall shortly have occasion to observe that while Pitt's theories led him to many praiseworthy actions and to a mode of life respectable upon the whole, he did not rise to the pitch of true morality. In any case, the fact that a young cavalry officer could devote time to the discussion of such questions betokens a serious turn of mind, although he ought to have kept his tendencies to self-assertiveness somewhat more under

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restraint. Moreover, the tone of self-advertisement which is obvious in the title leaves an unpleasant impression, and betrays too clearly the real object of the composition, the acquirement of personal notoriety.

It was during Pitt's early days of military service that the breach took place between his friends and the ruling minister, Sir Robert Walpole, an event destined to have a decisive effect on Pitt's career. Some detailed account must now be given of this circumstance.

Robert Walpole's position in English history has been already examined in the Introduction. As Cromwell was formerly representative of triumphant Puritanism, so was Walpole of triumphant Whiggism. As soon as the installation of the Hanoverian dynasty had raised him to a leading position, he was able, with the help of the plutocracy, so firmly to secure the supremacy he had won as to be above the attack of any rival among his party friends. Secure in the support of a corrupt Parliament, he guided the state with almost absolute, though by no means despotic power, for he had an honourable desire to preserve the peace and prosperity of the country. After the death of George I. in 1727 he was confronted with a critical situation, which his cleverness and his knowledge of human nature enabled him to surmount.

George II. was wholly incapable of grasping the reins of government for himself; he was merely a factor of whom an ambitious leader was bound to take account, a foundation upon which a government might be constructed. Hence it was highly important to make this foundation secure, and this could be done by special consideration of the king's personal weaknesses, especially of his avarice, and by securing the support of those persons who had most influence with the monarchy. Walpole succeeded admirably in this task of making the monarchical power subservient to himself; he provided the king with more than adequate supplies of the money for which he longed; he supported the interests of his hereditary territory of Hanover, and he secured the favour of his intelligent Queen Caroline, whose importance he recognised at an earlier date than his rivals. They, indeed, committed the mistake of applying to George's mistress, Henrietta Hobart, afterwards Countess of Suffolk, an amiable, good-tempered

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person, with no share in the king's inner life, and therefore without influence upon his actions. Thus Walpole speedily left his opponents behind, and was able to secure his hold of the reins of empire. Naturally the opposition did not diminish in numbers, and remained on the watch for opportunities to damage the minister's prestige, and to establish their own preponderance.

This opposition in no way formed a coherent party. It consisted of the most heterogeneous elements united only by the tie of hostility to Walpole. Jacobites, moderate Tories, opposition Whigs, came together under the high-sounding name of 'Patriot.' They professed to represent nothing but the welfare of the state, which, as they declared, was impaired by Walpole's policy. Naturally the first principle of every group was to make Walpole's overthrow conditional upon the performance of their own party desires. The opposition no doubt included important talents, but only for the reason that Walpole preferred to fill his offices with mediocrities, from whom he gained a readier subservience.

Men like Lord Chesterfield, William and David Pulteney, Lord Carteret, who were Whigs; the Tory, William Wyndham; the Jacobite, William Shippen, belonged to the leaders of the new party, the life and soul of which was Lord Bolingbroke, though he was unable to take any part in parliamentary action. But it was he who inspired the party, directed their procedure, and formulated the principles upon the basis of which these incongruous elements were united. This formulation was, however, only made possible by the appearance of a new personality, who might become a real centre of gravity, the heir to the throne.

Hitherto Prince Frederick of Wales had not set foot in England, but had continued to reside in Hanover. The well-known project was then brought forward for a marriage between him and Princess Wilhelmina of Prussia, the sister of Frederick the Great. When this plan was prevented by political differences, Prince Frederick attempted to secure the celebration of his marriage against the king's will, and in order to prevent any further efforts of the kind George II. found himself obliged to summon his son to England in 1729.[1] At first his arrival produced no change in the situation. The

[1] Mahon, *History of England*, ii. 209.

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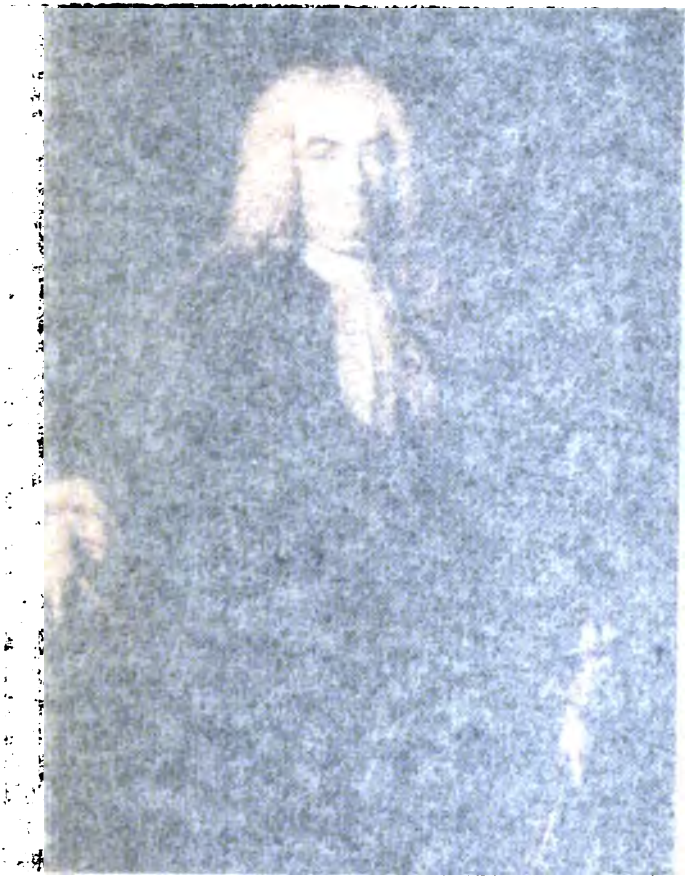

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Robert Walpole.

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prince was a weak and somewhat unintelligent character, though he could show sufficient tenacity when he had once resolved upon a certain course of action; he was, moreover, somewhat conceited and amenable to flattery, and at first held aloof from public affairs. It was not until 1731 that his differences with his father became acute. When he had realised this change of attitude, and had reason to consider that his interference in home politics might be advantageous to himself, he ventured to come forward upon the political scene.

The occasion in question was an Excise Bill, which was defended as being in conformity with the taxation imposed upon the adult population and with the increased prosperity of the country. There is no doubt that this was a justifiable and salutary measure, which would to-day pass unopposed; at that time it raised a storm of indignation in the nation. The masses, owing to their lack of political education, were utterly incapable of discussing the proposal and of judging it on its merits. The only points apparent to them were the threatened pecuniary loss and the man who wished to inflict it upon them. He was now regarded as a tyrant anxious to introduce a despotism and to rob them of their property. By this attitude the population at large naturally did not foster their own interests or those of the state; they proved, however, a valuable support to the efforts of the opposition leaders, who did their utmost to foment the existing excitement. The *Craftsman*, their political publication, vividly described the horrors of the ministerial proposal. So strong was the pressure of public feeling upon Parliament that Walpole's majority diminished ominously; he could not hope to collect the tax without resorting to force of arms, and he preferred to postpone discussion, or in other words to abandon the proposal.

Throughout this affair the Prince of Wales stood behind the scenes. The opposition leaders gathered round him, as did the literary and artistic celebrities of the day. The part he was playing flattered his vanity, and he began to conceive that his influence as heir-apparent was great and steadily increasing. The patriots owed their victory to his active support. Prince Frederick now became the object of Bolingbroke's attention when he undertook to formulate the leading

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ideas of the patriotic party. His 'Patriot King,' the title of a later pamphlet, was the ideal figure of a prince which he placed before the eyes of the heir-apparent as an example for imitation. His object was to harmonise the Whig principles, which assigned supreme power to popular representation, with those of the Tories, which gave the monarchy a dominating position. This appeared to be an insoluble problem, for the reason that two sovereignties cannot exist side by side, but Bolingbroke produced an apparent solution of so specious a nature that no small number of the honourable patriots accepted his theory, and one of its most zealous champions, for whom it became an intellectual possession of permanent influence, was, as we shall see, William Pitt.

Bolingbroke's fundamental idea was simply this, that no dissension could really exist between the two factors wielding supreme power, the king and the national representatives, provided that both recognised their true duties, and honestly confined themselves to these. Provided that both parties aimed at the welfare of the state, uninfluenced by side issues, their objects would be found to correspond; hence the king's obligation to yield to the demands of the Parliament was in reality no limitation to his power, which he would in any case exercise in this and in no other direction. The only possible result would be mutual support in place of mutual opposition. Upon this theory party differences disappeared, and the names of Whig and Tory became meaningless, inasmuch as the parties working upon principles so explained would be advancing upon parallel if not upon identical lines.

We can understand how Bolingbroke arrived at these ideas, and how they met with so ready a reception. In his case it was not exclusively selfishness or ambition, but rather a real desire for the welfare of the state, which brought him to these conclusions; but his investigations naturally led him in that direction which corresponded to his personal interests. And in taking this path he really believed that he had discovered a new fundamental truth, a basis upon which a body politic could develop to perfection. The promulgation of so comprehensive a formula was indeed characteristic of the outset of this epoch of enlightenment. Theories of the kind found credence in that age, for the reason that men had not acquired the necessary experience which we have since obtained in

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abundant measure. Hitherto the kings had been almost unconsciously under the influence of mediæval constitutional theory, and had invariably and constantly watched their own interests and those of their dynasty. A disproportionate amount of effort had been expended by them upon extending their powers, recovering privileges they had lost, and securing the means of conducting an independent policy. This was indeed inevitable, for some sound principles of accommodation between the component factors of the state had yet to be discovered. Thinkers who did not recognise the inevitable nature of this struggle were prone to imagine that a great improvement was possible if the monarch renounced all selfish and purely dynastic actions, and made the welfare of the state his sole guiding principle. Hence the picture of the Patriot King. It was not indeed forgotten that if Parliament, under the guidance of ambitious leaders or parties, secured predominance, a selfish policy prejudicial to the national welfare might be pursued. Against this it was urged that Parliament did not really represent the nation, but was corrupt and incapable. Men's thoughts naturally turned to the possibility of securing their objects by repairing these defects. A truly representative Parliament, a body hitherto unknown to experience, would be bound, it was argued, to adopt a wholly different attitude, to aim exclusively at the general welfare, which would also be its own, and so to work upon parallel lines with the Patriot King. Radical parliamentary reforms and universal suffrage were not necessarily implied; all that was needed was to abolish the corruption which Walpole had systematised, and to secure the independence of the electoral individual and corporation. Salvation consequently lay in the suppression of corruption and the purity of the electorate. As Walpole's power was based upon this corruption, such a reformation would produce his overthrow; this fact, however, was but a highly esteemed by-product of the process intended, or possibly the object with which the whole theory had been formulated. The ingenuousness of the theory consisted in the fact that a body of national representatives, representing by their very nature a number of special interests, were assumed capable of a policy devoted solely to the general good, whereas a majority, existing as it must upon a basis of interest, would naturally and continually place its interests in

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the foreground; secondly, the state welfare was considered as a permanently fixed objective always before men's aspirations, if they had the will to aspire, whereas the truth is that the nature of state welfare is a subject of most conflicting opinion. With the best intentions in the world two rival forces whose mutual relations are ill defined could never avoid friction, for the question would invariably arise which of their views upon state welfare ought to be put into practice.

In any case, Bolingbroke's ideas exercised great influence, as we have said. They provided a programme, serving as a point of union for different opposition groups, and enabling them to make head against their common enemy, Walpole, and provided them at the same time with an influential chief. Prince Frederick, the future Patriot King, took the lead of the party which aimed, actually or professedly, at the realisation of the new theory, though he was naturally not regarded as the real leader. In that position Lord Bolingbroke remained. He was indeed deprived of his seat in the Upper House by the majority in power, but he had his tools through whom he could vote and give expression to his ideas; in the House of Commons this position was occupied by William Wyndham; he had been imprisoned during the Jacobite disturbances of 1715, and was now regarded as the leader of the Tory wing of the opposition.

The defeat of the Excise Bill gave an advantage to the opponents of the government, which also became of importance for its influence upon Pitt's career. Though Walpole had ultimately given in, by reason of his objection to strong measures and to disturbances, yet he wished to show his power and to break the forces of his adversaries. The weakness of a plutocratic government as compared with a military rule was forthwith manifested. Incapable of strong methods or of making head against the stream, the government had recourse to various pettifogging actions to secure its position. A number of opposition officials were removed from their posts, though their conduct had been entirely blameless, while the positions they held were of no political importance. Lord Chesterfield, who had just married a natural daughter of George II. in defiance of the King, Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Marchmont, and others lost their positions in the royal household, while the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham were

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deprived of their military commands; Cobham thus resigned the cavalry regiment to which Pitt belonged.

Great indignation was aroused by these measures, not merely in those directly affected but in the nation at large. Such proceedings are unfortunately common enough in parliamentary states at the present day and are recognised as customary within certain limits; but at that time they were highly unusual, and served in the present case to bring a number of adherents to the opposition cause. An especially bad impression was produced by the interference in military affairs. A Bill was forthwith brought before Parliament to forbid the dismissal of commanding officers without the sentence of a court martial, but in this case, as the matter did not immediately touch popular interests, Walpole's influence was able to throw out the Bill.

Pitt naturally remained undisturbed in his position for the moment. The young cornet, who had gained his commission by Cobham's favour, was but an insignificant personality; the most that could be said was that his prospects of promotion were somewhat diminished by his patron's downfall. Some reputation, however, he must have enjoyed, for in a poem which George Lyttelton wrote upon him,[1] when he left the service in 1736, it is asserted that Pitt had long since made himself a name far superior to that of a mere cornet. No doubt the writer had in mind Pitt's Letter on Superstition, which may have attracted some attention, and perhaps also the reputation which his capacity had secured for him among his immediate friends, especially the Temple family. In other respects he remained the poor relation, forced to rely upon others for an opportunity to assert himself. A somewhat domineering attitude might easily have lost him the support of his jealous brother,[2] whose hand controlled the family constituencies. In any case he could not have rivalled the reputation of the intellectual Lyttelton, who at that time was attracting attention by his Persian Letters, a work which depicted English

[1] 'Long had thy virtues mark'd thee out for fame,
Far, far superior to a cornet's name.' (Thackeray, i. 14.)

[2] At a later date Shelburne relates: 'I spent a whole night with him (Thomas) in Utrecht; he inveighed continually against his brother as a hypocrite, scoundrel and traitor, with great vehemence and with many anecdotes of his character.'—Fitzmaurice, i. 72.

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affairs as seen through a Persian's eyes, and attempted to bring over public opinion to Bolingbroke's ideas.

Pitt, no doubt, anxiously desired a seat in Parliament, and in 1735 his wish was fulfilled. In the election of 1734 Thomas Pitt was returned for two seats which were under his influence, Old Sarum and Oakhampton.[1] He preferred to represent the latter constituency; accordingly, in February 1735, a second election took place in Old Sarum, when William was returned by his brother's desire. The other member was his brother-in-law, Robert Needham, the husband of his sister Catherine. Thus, at the moment when Pitt's prospects had been somewhat impaired by Cobham's resignation, a second path to greatness was thrown open to him, a path which probably seemed to him more promising at the outset, as it allowed him to turn to political account his greatest talent, his power of oratory. He naturally joined the party whose members had secured him the seat, and whose ideas he had appropriated, the patriots, and was specially associated with the group which began to form round Cobham, the family union of the Temples. Here were to be found young and rising talents of like principles, while Cobham appeared as their patron in accordance with his usual inclination. Apart from the members of the Pitt family, Thomas Pitt of Boconnock, William Pitt and Robert Needham, the following may be mentioned:[2] (1) George Lyttelton, who had been elected with Thomas Pitt in 1734 for the Pitt constituency of Oakhampton in Devonshire. He was certainly the most distinguished of the group, as being the most prominent literary figure and most nearly associated with the party leaders, the prince and Lord Cobham. (2) Richard Grenville, afterwards Lord Temple, an alert intriguing character, rather a politician than a statesman, but in any case a valuable ally. He had returned from abroad in 1733.[3] (3) James Hammond of Huntingdonshire, like Lyttelton, a political poet; he soon devoted his muse to the praise of Pitt[4] and was a favourite of Lord Chesterfield. (4) Henry Hyde, afterwards Viscount Cornbury, of whose continental tour we have already spoken. After his

[1] Thackeray, i. 6. *Dictionary of National Biography.*
[2] Details chiefly from the *Dictionary of National Biography.*
[3] *Grenville Papers*, i. 423.
[4] Thackeray, i. 16.

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return in 1732 he became a parliamentary member for the University of Oxford, and belonged to the Tory wing of Bolingbroke's party; he was a personal friend of Bolingbroke, who dedicated to him his *Letters on the Study and Use of History*. (5) Hugh, Lord Polwarth of Berwickshire, Earl of Marchmont after 1740; he, like Pitt, was born in 1708 and entered Parliament in 1734. His family was intimately connected with Cobham, who set up a bust of Hugh's father Alexander in his park at Stowe. Other members, closely allied, though not in immediate association with the group, were the following: William Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield; and Robert Henley, afterwards Lord Northington; both of these had been undergraduates at Oxford in Pitt's time. This nucleus was joined by younger members, and a group was thus formed which was of importance, not so much for its numbers as for its capacity, vigour, and youthful energy. All the members were about Pitt's age and about the age of the Prince of Wales, with whom they were to come into closer contact. When they began their efforts in the new Parliament of 1735 they were scornfully termed by Walpole the 'boy patriots' and by others the 'Cobham cousinhood'; it was, however, with them that the minister was to undergo a very serious struggle.

This young and vigorous opposition came forward just at the moment when Walpole was enjoying a momentary calm. The ministerial majority had indeed somewhat diminished at the elections. The influence of the heir-apparent had been felt, especially in the duchy of Cornwall, whence the prince derived his ducal title, and where he had many rights. Notwithstanding his expenditure of money, Walpole had suffered considerable loss, but the votes which were left to him still formed a powerful majority, and were more securely determined for the minister than before, so that the opposition had even less prospect than formerly of accomplishing their desires. Differences also broke out among the members of the party, and Bolingbroke found himself obliged to leave England once more, and to visit his refuge of Château Chanteloup in Touraine. Pulteney seems to have been the cause of his departure. Moreover, in 1734, Lady Suffolk gave up her thankless and unremunerative post at Court; the behaviour of George the Second even towards his mistresses

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was stingy and mean; she retired to her estates to lead a more peaceful existence. Thus the opposition might easily have fallen to pieces had not Prince Frederick, whose dissensions with the king grew steadily more acute, thrown himself into the breach with the young guard.

Pitt was at that time connected with the circle of the heir-apparent by several ties, which deserve a word of explanation.

First, we have to mention the position of his brother, Thomas Pitt, who was established in the prince's duchy. In 1717, after the sale of the diamond, Governor Pitt had bought the estate of Boconnock in Cornwall. Robert's mother-in-law, Lady Grandison, had induced the old gentleman to conclude this purchase, foreseeing that the property would descend to the eldest son.[1] This event came to pass, but Robert did not take up his residence there, though he naturally visited this most important of his estates. He remained in Swallowfield. Robert's son Thomas was the first to reside in Boconnock, and to assume the title of the property. As a landed proprietor in the duchy, he was in constant connection with the prince, especially at election times, for his influence upon various constituencies[2] made him a highly important personality to the opposition leaders. His brother's relations with the prince naturally affected William Pitt's position.

Moreover, his friend George Lyttelton was a *persona gratissima* with the prince, whom he had known from the date of his return from the Continent. Lyttelton had rendered certain services to the prince either in domestic affairs or on business, and had declined any pecuniary recompense even for the expense he had incurred; this unselfishness, which may well have been calculated, had borne rich fruit, for Lyttelton now became the adviser and declared favourite of the prince.[3] This was an event of even more importance to Pitt than his brother's position. His friend George Lyttelton not only introduced him to the prince, but announced him in most favourable terms, so that a certain confidential relationship rapidly developed between the two young men. Lyttelton seems to have been an unusually high-minded character; notwithstanding the more or less definite rivalry that always

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 62.
[2] Cp. *Ibid.*, p. 107 ff.
[3] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 50 f.

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existed between himself and Pitt, he was swayed by no feelings of jealousy, and fully recognised his friend's capacity in his poems. He must have been a considerable help to Pitt, who had his own position to make.

The third tie of connection with the Court was the position of his sister Anna, who was then maid of honour to Queen Caroline.[1] She was not, however, on the side of the party in power, as is obvious from the fact that her most intimate acquaintance was Lady Suffolk, Walpole's opponent. At a later period she entered the service of the Princess of Wales. She is described as beautiful and clever, and of an unusually lively disposition, so that her friends jestingly called her 'Mrs. Jingle.' We have a number of letters to her, almost entirely from Lady Suffolk and the Duchess of Queensberry,[2] but none from her own hand. The duchess was the daughter of the last Earl of Clarendon, and therefore the sister of Lord Cornbury, whose acquaintance we have already made as one of the 'boy patriots.' Her husband, the Admiral of Scotland, had quarrelled with the king and gone over to the opposition camp. She herself was a famous beauty of a highly eccentric disposition, witty and amiable; she is said to have preserved her beauty and good looks to an extraordinarily late age, but never to have altered the fashion of her dress, so that she looked like a picture of the past period. The poets of the time wrote much in her praise; reference is made to her in the most important works of the time, and she must accordingly not only have made a deep impression on Pitt, but also have exercised considerable influence upon him.[3] In her letters and those of Lady Suffolk to Anna Pitt, which extend from 1734-40, we have strangely enough hardly a single reference to William Pitt; this, however, is explained by the fact that the letters deal with wholly unimportant personal experiences and affairs in which Pitt happened to have no share. That his sister's influence brought him into connection with Lady Suffolk's court clique is beyond practical doubt. At her estate at Marble Hill in Twickenham, the administration of which was shared by Pope, Swift, and Lord Pembroke, the countess kept

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. xiii.
[2] Printed in Dropmore MSS., p. 92-107.
[3] *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* The Queensberrys also possessed an estate in Old Sarum, but whether at this date is unknown.—*Hist. of Old Sarum*, p. 143.

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open house to the leaders of the opposition and the famous authors of the day; Pitt cannot have been excluded, though George Lyttelton was a more important guest on account of his poetic powers. Upon the bust of Lady Suffolk, which Cobham erected at Stowe, Lyttelton wrote a set of flattering verses which took some liberties with the truth.[1]

It must be said that the outset of Pitt's parliamentary career gave little promise of great achievement. He lacked the sound foundation of a thorough education and a definite profession, for military service soon ceased to be the centre of his attention, as it was somewhat inconsistent with his position in the parliamentary opposition. There was a danger that he might degenerate to the level of a political place-seeker, of whom there were then in England enough and to spare; men who sought to secure offices by their connections or their parliamentary importance without possessing the smallest capacity or training for responsibility. To eyes accustomed to modern institutions, the mode of dispensing offices then prevalent must appear somewhat remarkable. Men who had done nothing more than deliver a few clever speeches, and perhaps not so much, rose rapidly to leading positions, while officials were transferred at a moment's notice from one to another branch of the administration, as the political situation might demand. Even in the army groundless promotions were by no means unexampled. In every case a most unpleasant impression is caused by the emphasis laid upon the remuneration attached to office, as though promotion were nothing more than a mere financial transaction, and a pecuniary benefit conferred by the dispenser of office. We have already seen how Governor Pitt secured a commission for his son, and this mode of procedure was almost universal. It seems almost as if the duties attached to offices were, apart from the many sinecures, a wholly secondary matter, for in view of the complexity of the administration capable performance could not be expected without a long course of previous training. The state ought to have suffered severe loss, but as a matter of fact this was not the case. The machinery of government worked very well, and better than in many other states.

This inconsistency is to be explained by the fact that, as in present day parliamentary government, the politicians in

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

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office were not concerned with the actual details of administration; they exercised only a general supervision and looked after the interests of their party, while well-trained subordinates kept the actual work in their hands in cases where their chief showed inadequate capacity or was incompetent to learn the details of his business. The contrast with our present day system consisted in two special points. In the first place, men who were able to rise by their family or parliamentary connection were drawn from a definite and comparatively small proportion of the nation, the nobility and gentry, among whom administrative talent was usual and, in certain cases, hereditary. In the details of county and parish administration they found an opportunity for previous training and for development of their powers, so that in many cases they were able to cope with responsibilities entirely outside of their experience. Moreover, at that period there was no systematic division between parliamentary and non-parliamentary offices, and the relations between the supervisory and working officials had not been rigidly defined. Again, high offices could be secured by steady progress upwards, and subordinate parliamentary posts could be given away, so that the question settled itself according to the requirements of special cases.

Regarded from the true point of view the situation appears to be this: the upper and especially the governing classes were possessed of the monopoly of a very large number of salaried posts, or, in other words, were able to provide for a corresponding number of their own members. This was a tax or premium which the nation paid to the upper classes, for a far smaller number of offices would have been adequate for the national needs; as the only means of securing these high posts was the acquisition of wealth a strong impulse to money-making was thus provided, though at the same time an impulse no less strong was given to unscrupulous methods of making it. In the case of Thomas Pitt we have seen his constant anxiety to purchase political influence and position among the ruling classes with the wealth he had gained. In such positions there was no doubt plenty of work for those who desired it, and a certain minimum of energy was obligatory, although continuance in office was not dependent upon this. Most of the work performed was voluntary, undertaken under the influence of ambition and desire for occupation.

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Pitt had now entered upon his political career; his object was to procure prestige and importance by his connections and his oratorical skill, not by means of fruitful work or by slow and steady progress. The question then arises, with what object? Was he merely anxious to secure a remunerative office, did he wish only for administrative occupation, or had he anything higher in view? Our next section will provide an answer to the question.

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SECTION II

POLITICAL EDUCATION

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST APPEARANCE

Pitt was now a member of the House of Commons. This was a dignity which raised him above the common herd and even above the merely wealthy. It brought him social advantages and many rights and privileges. These were, however, non-essential matters of no real political importance. The truth is, that he was able to point to little or nothing which might justify a claim to serious respect. The electors who had given him the seat consisted of his brother and a few well-bribed landowners upon whom he was dependent, while they were neither willing nor able to give him that strong support which might have made him important. As yet he played a wholly unimportant part in the political group which he had joined. His capacities were to strengthen their power, but he could not use their help to lay the foundations of his own.[1] Thus he was merely the tool of his patrons, and could not become an independent force except by his own efforts. His scanty resources did not permit him to raise a following of his own; indeed, he was much rather the poor follower with a position entirely dependent upon the goodwill of his relations, although that position remained absolutely his for the next seven years. He was under an obligation, if not formally, at any rate in fact, to act and to vote in accordance with their opinions. The patriotic party held constant meetings. We have already referred to their reunions at Twickenham at the house of Lady Suffolk. The prince often invited the leaders

[1] This was a not unjustifiable reproach levelled against him by the *Gasetteer*. —Almon, *Anecdotes of Chatham*, p. 16.

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to his house; from the year 1734, during the parliamentary session, the Liberty Club, jestingly known as the Rump Steak Club, met every Tuesday; it consisted of Walpole's opponents under the presidency of Cobham.[1] Pitt's name does not appear in connection with any one of these organisations. That he participated in them is not impossible and is even likely, but it is plain that he was nothing more than a subordinate member, which again is no matter for surprise. He must have come fairly often into contact with the prince, for in his first parliamentary speech he represents himself as well acquainted with the habits and the personal advantages of the heir-apparent, and he would hardly have ventured upon such assertions without reasonable ground. The origin of this connection we have already seen. At that time, however, it cannot have become intimate; Pitt had done nothing to justify intimacy.

In the House of Commons he, like his father, was unable to take a share in business from the moment of his entry; he had first to become accustomed to the forms and usages in vogue, and to learn to work upon slippery and difficult ground. A few days after taking his seat he was indeed employed by the minority to perform some unimportant[2] duty, but this was somewhat unusual, and is for that reason expressly mentioned. During the first session he took no part in the debates, though a favourable opportunity for participation was soon to occur.

The tension existing between the prince and his father steadily increased, and for this it cannot be denied that the son was principally to blame. Though George II. had provided the first occasion of the quarrel, it was Prince Frederick who put every obstacle in the way of reconciliation and seized every opportunity to increase the friction. It was a kind of obstinacy which we find also at that time in the case of his cousin, the Crown-Prince Frederick of Prussia, whose differences with his father led to still more grievous quarrels.[3] In either case the fact is intelligible though inexcusable. Prince Frederick of Wales was especially anxious to get married.

[1] *Marchmont Papers*, ed. Rose, i. 19. London, 1831.

[2] Almon, *Anecdotes*, p. 7.

[3] In the state archives of Berlin a special collection of documents exists providing information concerning the dissensions at the English Court, which were collected at the instance of Frederick William I., and had a special interest for him.

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He had been greatly vexed at the abandonment of his proposed marriage with Wilhelmina of Prussia, not that he had any love for her—he did not even know her personally, but he wished to marry as quickly as possible, and the breaking-off of this engagement postponed the fulfilment of his desires. His anxiety is to be explained by the fact that, in the first place, he wanted a more independent position and a larger household of his own, and, secondly, that he was anxious for children in order to destroy the prospects of succession entertained by his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, for whom he had little affection. He certainly suspected that his father was trying to prevent or put off the marriage in order to improve his brother's prospects, so in the year 1734 he resolved upon an energetic step.[1] He extorted an audience of the king from the reluctant Walpole, and, when this was granted, he issued three demands: he asked for an increased allowance to be regularly paid, a suitable marriage to be found for him, and for permission to take part in a continental war. The king had no intention of granting the first or the last of these wishes, and he therefore resolved to find his son a wife. His choice fell upon the Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, whose acquaintance he had made in Hanover, and the marriage took place on April 27, 1736. The prince, satisfied to have attained so much, thanked his father in comparatively polite terms, and conceived a real affection for his young wife, which her beauty and her amiable behaviour certainly deserved. Hopes that she would bring about a reconciliation between the members of the family were speedily undeceived; the existing dissension had already become too strong.

The remarkable feature of this transaction was the fact that the marriage was brought about entirely against the wishes of the prime minister. It might be regarded as a triumph for the heir-apparent, who had extorted the king's consent by his own efforts, and as such it was a success for the opposition in alliance with him. Hence the opposition was commissioned to move the address of congratulation in Parliament. The motion was brought forward by Pulteney. He moved 'That an address be humbly presented to his Majesty upon the occasion of the marriage of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales expressing the satisfaction and the great joy of his

[1] Cp. Ballantyne, *Life of Carteret*, p. 178 f.

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faithful Commons at this happy event, which they regard with inexpressible satisfaction as a means, by the help of Divine Providence, of strengthening the Protestant cause, and securing the Laws and liberty of the Nation for all time to no less an extent than that liberty is now enjoyed in happiness and gratitude under the mild and gracious Government of his Majesty.' This was the usual colourless and clumsily obsequious form of composition traditional in these motions, so that there was no question of any opposition. The references to Protestant interests, to the constitution and its privileges, had always been customary since the Revolution. If the opposition desired to use the opportunity for striking a blow at the government, this could only be done in the speeches in favour of the address; here, however, they were obliged to keep within strict limits and to avoid any possibility of wounding sentiments of loyalty. George Lyttelton and William Pitt undertook the task, and the fact that they were able to strike the keynote most consonant with the interests of the opposition proved highly important to them both.

Before we consider Pitt's maiden speech it must be observed that the traditional account of the parliamentary debates is exceedingly defective. A short time before, as we have observed, the reporting of speeches was strictly forbidden, and rhetorical achievements could thus be rescued from oblivion only by some indirect means.[1] From 1737 the well-known author Dr. Johnson, a contemporary of Pitt, who also studied at Oxford, collected speeches for the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He was then followed by a Scottish ecclesiastical official, Mr. Gordon, who reproduced speeches in the *London Magazine*. Notes of them were gathered in a coffee-house, near Westminster, frequented by members, or if the editor could gain admittance to the gallery he wrote down as quickly as possible from memory what he heard. Hence Pitt's speeches have come down to us in a most defective form, which cannot be regarded as authentic. In their present form they are little more than dissertations composed by the reporter on the basis of Pitt's thoughts and arguments. They provide us with a general view of Pitt's policy and with his main ideas, but any attempt to bring the speeches into relation with one another or to base conclusions upon single assertions would be wholly erroneous.

[1] Cp. Almon, *Anecdotes*, p. 21.

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Nor could their present form give us any true idea of the real essential power which inspired Pitt's oratory. We have a weakened and emasculated reproduction in which the art and polish is more likely due to the editor than to the orator. Hence the reports of contemporaries who were present at the time are far more important and reliable than the speeches themselves.

Pitt's first speech with which we have here to deal was not reproduced by Johnson, but by a certain William Guthrie, a literary hack, who worked for the *Gentleman's Magazine*. His notes were usually revised by Johnson. Compared with later editions they may be comparatively true to fact, for they were almost immediately published in separate form on account of the lively interest which they aroused. Moreover, the brevity of the speech and the simplicity of the train of thought facilitated an immediate reproduction from memory. As the speech is of decisive importance to Pitt's career, and as that importance can only be appreciated by a knowledge of its contents, it is indispensable to print it here; in its present form it stands as follows:[1]—

'I am unable, sir, to offer anything suitable to the dignity and importance of the subject, which has not already been said by my honourable friend who made the motion.[2] But I am so affected with the prospect of the blessings to be derived by my country from this most desirable, this long-desired, measure—the marriage of his Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales—that I cannot forbear troubling the House with a few words expressive of my joy. I cannot help mingling my offering, inconsiderable as it is, with this oblation of thanks and congratulation to his Majesty.

'However great, sir, the joy of the public may be, and great undoubtedly it is, in receiving this benefit from his Majesty, it must yet be inferior to that high satisfaction which he himself enjoys in bestowing it. If I may be allowed to suppose that anything in a Royal mind can transcend the pleasure of gratifying the earnest wishes of a loyal people, it can only be the tender, paternal delight of indulging the most dutiful application, the most humble request, of a submissive and obedient son. I mention, sir, his Royal Highness' having asked a marriage, because something is in justice due to him for having asked that, for which being granted, we are so strongly bound, by all the

[1] Printed in Thackeray, i. 12 f.

[2] This was Pulteney, not Lyttelton, as Thackeray states.

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ties of duty and gratitude, to return his Majesty our humble acknowledgments.

'The marriage of a Prince of Wales, sir, has at all times been a matter of the highest importance to the public welfare—to present, to future generations. But at no time (if a character at once amiable and respectable can embellish, and even dignify, the elevated rank of a Prince of Wales) has it been a more important, a dearer consideration than at this day. Were it not a sort of presumption to follow so great a personage through his hours of retirement; to view him in the milder light of domestic life, we should find him engaged in the noble exercise of humanity, benevolence, and every social virtue. But, sir, however pleasing, however captivating such a scene may be, yet, as it is a private one, I fear I should offend the delicacy of that virtue to which I so ardently desire to do justice, were I to offer it to the consideration of this House. But, sir, filial duty to his Royal parents, a generous love of liberty, and a just reverence of the British constitution—these are public virtues, and cannot escape the applause and benediction of the public. These are virtues, sir, which render his Royal Highness not only a noble ornament but a firm support, if any could possibly be wanting, of that throne so greatly filled by his Royal father.

'I have been led to say thus much of his Royal Highness' character, because it is the consideration of that character which, above all things, enforces the justice and goodness of his Majesty in the measure now before us—a measure which the nation thought could never be taken too soon, because it brings with it the promise of an additional strength to the Protestant succession in his Majesty's illustrious and Royal House. The spirit of liberty dictated that succession, the same spirit now rejoices in the prospect of its being perpetuated to latest posterity. It rejoices in the wise and happy choice which his Majesty has been pleased to make of a Princess so amiably distinguished in herself, so illustrious in the merit of her family, the glory of whose great ancestor it is to have sacrificed himself in the noblest cause for which a prince can draw his sword—the cause of liberty and the Protestant religion.

'Such, sir, is the marriage for which our most humble acknowledgments are due to his Majesty. May it afford the comfort of seeing the Royal family, numerous as, I thank God, it is, still growing and rising up into a third generation! A family, sir, which I most earnestly hope may be as immortal as those liberties and that constitution which they came to maintain. Sir, I am heartily for the motion.'

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On this speech very different judgments have been passed. The contemporary writer Tindal pronounced it 'more ornamental than the declamations of Demosthenes and less diffuse than those of Cicero.' He thus did not shrink from comparing this maiden effort with the greatest masterpieces of classical oratory, and regarding it even as superior in certain respects. Notwithstanding the obvious absurdity of this judgment, it was for a long period generally accepted among historians. Thackeray and others adopted it without comment. Only Lord Mahon regarded the matter from a more unprejudiced point of view, and considered that the speech showed but little eloquence and even less intellectual dexterity, though this defect was to be ascribed to the nature of the subject-matter. He felt obliged to refuse the comparison with Demosthenes and Cicero as premature. Macaulay also thought but little of it: he pronounced it 'just as empty and wordy as a maiden speech on such an occasion might be expected to be.'[1] Thus he carried exaggeration to the opposite extreme, as his refusal to attach any importance to the speech leaves unexplained the impression which it actually produced.

If the speech be read dispassionately, without reference to the orator's position and to the case with which he had to deal, we should be generally inclined to accept the second opinion. At first sight the speech certainly appears a dismal and bombastic patch-work of servile exaggeration, in full consonance with the courtly style of that century and similar to the Latin ode upon George I. which Pitt composed during his University career. Were we ignorant of the speaker, the speech might be regarded as the rhetorical effusion of some court official who had been entrusted with its delivery. The facts of the case are, however, entirely different. In the first place we need not take into account the heaviness of the style, which is as likely to be due to the editor as to the speaker. The point to notice is that the general servility of the language is merely a cloak for the concealment of exceedingly bitter satire.[2] We need only remember that every one was aware of the strained relations between the king and his son,

[1] Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays*, p. 295. London, 1899.
[2] Cp. *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. *Revision of the Chatham Correspondence*, p. 193 f.

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that the king and his consort disliked the prince almost to hatred and treated him with contempt, while the prince replied with an open display of disobedience and defiance. Such being the position of affairs, Pitt proceeded to emphasise with the utmost extravagance the tender sympathy of the father and the submissive respect of the son. This attitude was in precise contradiction to the truth, and yet no one could accuse the orator of misrepresentation, for throughout the diplomacy which preceded the marriage an outward appearance of unity and obedience had been sedulously preserved. After the king had announced to the Privy Council his intention of marrying his son, a deputation of the Council waited upon the prince to learn his wishes.[1] The prince replied that he had always regarded it as his duty to submit to the will of his father, and that consequently the Princess of Saxe-Gotha or anybody else was a choice entirely satisfactory to himself, while he would also agree to any arrangement of the marriage festivities which might seem good to his Majesty. Pitt was thus formally justified in speaking of the tender feeling which existed between father and son, but the emphasis which he laid upon this point and the picture of ideal domestic life which he based upon this foundation must have been interpreted in every quarter as the bitterest irony. To this must be added the fact that the desires of the prime minister had been wholly ignored, and that the king's power of personal initiative had been successfully exercised; on this point the orator was able to make a thrust at Walpole and to remind him of the defeat he had suffered. George II. must have received the speech with very mixed feelings, extolling, as it did, his gracious behaviour and his paternal love in a matter to which everybody knew that his consent had been extorted with the utmost difficulty. Pitt's utterances upon this point cannot have failed to evoke a keen discussion upon the real state of affairs.

Pitt was further able to use this opportunity for pronouncing a number of elaborate flatteries to the prince, the idol of his party, without the smallest possibility of incurring any reproof. Officially the prince was the king's beloved son. He had expressed a wish to his father which had delighted the nation and which his father had officially

[1] Rapin, *History of England*, translated by Pauli, xi. 494. Halle, 1760.

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welcomed. He was at the most important turning-point of his life. No one could reproach a parliamentary orator if he were carried into eulogy by his sentiments of thankfulness and respect. Greater loyalty than this was impossible And yet it was loyalty that exalted the king's rival, the most dangerous opponent of the prime minister, and advanced the progress of a system to which Walpole was to fall a victim.

A correct view of the speech, therefore, will not place it on a level with the great orations of antiquity, for it was in no way so outstanding or so influential an effort. On the other hand, it is not to be regarded as a mere empty court announcement or as a formal maiden speech. It was an exceedingly clever stroke delivered against the government, which must have wounded the king and minister the more deeply for the reason that veiled attacks of this kind were by no means customary. Sarcasm was then a new weapon, and consequently penetrated more deeply than in later times. It is, however, remarkable that sarcasm is a style alien to Pitt's later speeches, so that this speech bears a somewhat unique character, a circumstance which cannot possibly be referred to the embarrassment of a first appearance.

At this point we have to remember that Pitt was not the only opposition orator upon this occasion. With him was associated his friend George Lyttelton, who was regarded as his intellectual superior. His speech[1] followed practically the same train of thought as Pitt's. He too emphasised the filial relationship of the prince to his father and his fine qualities; he too expressed his joy at the guarantee of a Protestant succession, etc. Upon individual points he went even further. He emphasised the fact that the ministers had had no share in the king's resolve, which had been carried out solely upon his own initiative. He devoted special attention to describing the dangers arising from a regency which might become possible had the marriage been longer deferred; for in that case the government would be carried on by ministers, and this was government in its worst conceivable form, an argument again aimed at Walpole. Upon the whole, however, the speeches are surprisingly similar in style and content; hence we may certainly assume that the one speaker was dependent upon the other, that one originated a line

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 71 f. *Parliamentary History*, ix. 1223 ff.

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of thought which the other pursued. The question arises, Which speech is to be regarded as the original? and an important point for the solution of the problem is the further question, Which of the two orators was especially addicted to satire? In Pitt's speeches the satirical element is somewhat rare; Lyttelton, on the other hand, had just published the Persian Letters, an opposition satire of high influence; he excelled also in keenly satirical poetry. In the reports of the Prussian Embassy (in which Pitt is not mentioned until the year 1746) we find the following remarks upon Lyttelton, under date November 1737: 'this Litleton (*sic*) is one of the boldest frondeurs in the Parliament. The King hates him so bitterly that he cannot bear to hear his name mentioned; . . . and he is also the secret author of some of the most ferocious pamphlets against the ministry that have recently been published.' We have already seen that Lyttelton's speech was somewhat fuller, and that he was regarded as the greater orator for his share in this debate; hence we shall not be far wrong in assuming that the idea of criticising the government in this manner and the general line of thought originated with Lyttelton. Surprise has been expressed at the fact that so mistaken an estimate could be placed upon the relative powers of the two friends, and that, for instance, the poet Pope could proclaim Lyttelton the rising genius of the age, while Pitt was overshadowed by his friend. But an unprejudiced view of the case and a proper idea of the relation of Pitt to Lyttelton will provide the explanation. Pitt had made his way into Parliament as a client of the Temple group and of his brother; he was obliged to cling to them, was placed in the forefront during the debate on the address, and duly instructed by Lyttelton for the purpose. Such was the occasion of his maiden speech, though no doubt its construction owes much to himself. Lyttelton, who had conceived the idea, was naturally able to drive home the arguments when once they had been enounced.

The position becomes even more explicable in view of the following facts. Pitt's great oratorical advantages, which afterwards secured him the highest position, were his imposing bearing, his theatrical attitude, his expressive voice, his flashing eye, together with his intellectual powers of clear exposition, realistic description, and compelling oratorical

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power. These were merits of no use in the present case. Indeed, to a sarcastic and outwardly servile attitude they were utterly unsuitable. Classical pathos with its usual environment was of no advantage here. He was not authorised, indeed, to speak as he would. He came out of the business with credit and showed himself a vigorous debater[1] and a dangerous opponent, but on this occasion he did not display his true style of oratory which afterwards gained him his power. In the debate he also appears as a dependent personality, as the pupil of his more highly gifted friend, though no doubt Lyttelton had already formed a higher opinion of his powers.

We need not assume that Pitt would thus patiently have adopted a dependent position, had he not deemed it necessary for the prosecution of definite objects. The reasons for entrusting Pitt with the responsibility of this speech are by no means obscure. His military commission was a somewhat doubtful possession after Cobham had lost his command and Pitt himself had joined the opposition. Hence it was necessary to provide some other remunerative occupation for him. Pitt was to be started in life anew, and his friends turned their eyes upon the household which the Prince of Wales had just set up. Here there were offices carrying an adequate if not a rich salary, and offering at the same time good prospects for the future, as sooner or later the prince's accession was to be expected. A speaker in Parliament who pressed the marriage from the prince's point of view and who, while flattering him, was able to deliver a palpable blow at his opponents, would have a claim to future consideration even if all existing offices had already been distributed. No doubt many other speakers would have been willing and probably able to take Pitt's place, but these parts were apportioned by the leaders; hence they, doubtless upon Lyttelton's recommendation, chose Pitt as most suitable to their purpose. It was a considerable concession to allow Pitt to speak upon the matter at all, and he was naturally obliged to adopt that line of argument most likely to promote the desired object. The whole proceeding had been pre-arranged from the outset, and Pitt was forced to tune his instrument to that of Lyttelton.

The influence of the speech was decisive. The House was

[1] Lady Irwin to Lord Carlisle, in Green, *W. Pitt*, p. 11.

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delighted, and a feeling of malicious joy, concealed beneath an appearance of loyalty, may well have gone through the assembly when they heard the tender love of the father and son depicted in such glowing colours. The young orator was rewarded by loud applause, which could be ascribed to his cutting sarcasm or to his manifestations of loyalty with equal consistency, and therefore compromised no one. The prince was delighted, and publicly signified his pleasure and his favour to the orator.[1] Naturally he could not express his gratitude in any immediately practical manner, but there could be no doubt that Lyttelton and Pitt secured a claim upon him for the future. They might consider with truth that they had entirely attained the object of their action.

Upon the other side, also, that result was secured which they had no doubt foreseen, though they may not have absolutely calculated upon it. Walpole was deeply wounded by the blow which had been dealt against him, the more so as any reply to so covert an attack seemed impossible. 'We must at all events,' he is said to have exclaimed, 'muzzle that terrible cornet of horse.'[2] This was an impossible task, as Pitt could not be deprived of his seat in the House of Commons, and Walpole was therefore reduced to depriving him at any rate of the position which he held in the state service, his cornetcy.[3] The dismissal took effect on the 17th-18th May 1736, and the commission was filled up immediately.[4]

Pitt's first speech thus cost him something. The career he had at first chosen was suddenly cut short. We cannot immediately assume that this was a matter of indifference or even of desire to Pitt. No doubt he cherished hopes of retaining his post until the downfall of Walpole's government, and then of using it for purposes of advancement, for a position in the prince's court could have very well been held in conjunction with his military commission. Moreover, the dismissal of officers for political reasons was most unusual.

[1] Almon, *Anecdotes*, i. 11.

[2] Thackeray, i. 14.

[3] Lady Irwin to Lord Carlisle, May 20, 1736: 'The king two days ago turned out Mr. Pitt from a cornetcy, for having voted and spoken in Parliament contrary to his approbation; he is a young man of no fortune. a very pretty speaker, one the prince is particular to, and under the tuition of my Lord Cobham.' *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fifteenth Rep.*, App., part vi., p. 172.

[4] *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 194.

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Bolton and Cobham had indeed been deprived of their commissions, but such action was not to be expected in the case of junior officers possessed of no political influence. In Pitt's case there was no intelligible reason for such a step, as mere revenge was unstatesmanlike. His dismissal thus caused great excitement. The army in particular regarded the matter as extremely serious; it seemed that the most subordinate positions were no longer secure from ministerial attacks delivered for political purposes. The general opinion was that this action would damage the king's cause far more than the dismissal of the lords from their high commands.[1] The novelty of the measure was, however, a very favourable circumstance for Pitt. His name was suddenly in men's mouths, which would not have been the case if this mode of dismissal had been customary. Every one was talking of the young cornet who had lost his commission as a martyr to his political convictions. Pitt, too, was able to turn the matter to political account with considerable adroitness. He is said to have gone through the country in a one-horse chaise, which he drove himself, without servants, to display himself before the crowds which flocked to meet him and to receive their acclamations.[2] A trick of this kind would hardly be considered derogatory in a state in which no man could rise to political importance without at times playing the demagogue.

However, his dismissal was followed by more valuable acknowledgments of his capacity. George Lyttelton, who had really been at the bottom of the whole business, as he was the moving spirit of Pitt's speech, dedicated a set of flattering verses to him.

> 'Long had thy virtues marked thee out for fame
> Far, far superior to a Cornet's name;
> This generous Walpole saw, and grieved to find
> So mean a post disgrace that noble mind:
> The servile standard from the free born hand
> He took, and bade thee lead the patriot band.'

In estimating Pitt's position we cannot naturally lay great stress upon effusions of this nature; mention of him as leader of the patriotic band was nothing more than a use of poetic licence necessitated by the requirements of antithesis. As he

[1] Lady Irwin to Lord Carlisle, May 20, 1736.
[2] Seward, *Anecdotes*, ii. 399.

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had hitherto formally borne the standard of the cavalry, so was he now to bear that of the party, and to be its leader to this extent, but not its commander. However much his reputation had been advanced by these events, Lyttelton had risen with equal rapidity, and Pitt still appears as following his friend's lead.

His dismissal also improved Pitt's relations with Cobham; as Cobham's companion in misfortune he enjoyed his sympathy and his warm friendship in place of the mere acquaintanceship of earlier days.[1] The old gentleman was strongly attracted by Pitt's cleverness and amiable behaviour, and by his social talents; Pitt especially excelled in clever witticisms, epigrammatic remarks, and small poetic productions, while he also showed interest in the composition of cheerful songs,[2] and Cobham soon found the company of the young man almost indispensable. How high he stood in Cobham's opinion is best proved by the fact that the poets who resorted to the house found it advisable to expend some of the flatteries upon Pitt which they devoted to their rich patron. James Thomson, in his poem 'Autumn,' refers to Pitt as his country's early boast, speaks of the enchantment of his company, and warns him to use his eloquence in the 'Senate' to 'shake corruption on her venal throne.' James Hammond, the above-mentioned boy patriot, inserted some praises of Pitt in a poem dedicated to Cobham upon his beautiful country seat of Stowe. He writes as follows:

> 'There Pitt in manner soft, in friendship warm,
> With mild advice my listening grief shall charm;
> With sense to counsel and with wit to please,
> A Roman's virtue with a courtier's ease.'

The reference to the mildness and gentleness of Pitt's behaviour shows us that he in no way tried to assume a dominating position at Stowe. That self-possessed, energetic, and somewhat domineering character in which he afterwards appeared is so out of harmony with this description that we may assume him to have held himself well in check during his stay at Stowe. He was a talkative and welcome friend and guest, but was conscious of his dependent position, and did not venture to take too much upon himself, lest he should

[1] Almon, i. 12 ff.

[2] Coxe, *H. Walpole*, ii. 350 f.

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lose the favour he had secured. In conformity with this view is a reference to Pitt in a satire of 1746, 'The unembarrassed countenance,' which says

> 'At first he was modestly, humbly wise;
> He flattered all others in order to rise.'

It would, however, be wholly erroneous to conclude from these poetical compliments that his future greatness had been already foreseen. Had such a possibility been obvious, these servile poets would probably have held their peace about him. Their praises were given to Cobham's friend, and not to the independent politician.

Pitt's first public appearance and its results thus brought him, if not outstanding fame, at any rate the name of a clever speaker, a certain popularity, and the favour of the opposition leaders, especially of Cobham and of the prince, whereby his prospects were improved. In no long time a fresh opportunity was afforded for his further advancement upon the same path.

Prince Frederick had been somewhat unfavourably treated from a monetary point of view. George II. as Prince of Wales had received a yearly allowance of £100,000 out of the £700,000 to which the king's civil list had amounted. Although the civil list had risen since that date to £800,000, he gave his son an allowance of only £50,000, which the prince found insufficient to meet the many demands upon him. At this time the king was seriously ill, and his death was shortly expected. Thus for the moment it seemed advisable to let the matter rest, and not to embark upon a course of action which after events might speedily prove unnecessary. However, the prince thought the king's infirmities too protracted, and declined to wait. He induced the opposition to bring a proposal before Parliament, begging the king to confer an appanage of £100,000 upon the heir-apparent. This action was not inspired solely by pecuniary needs, for the prince might have issued his demand long previously by asking Parliament directly for a subsidy from the national revenue; he was anxious to humiliate his father, and to inflict a defeat upon the ruling minister which might result in his overthrow. The opportunity seemed favourable, for the reason that his demands were not in themselves exces-

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sive. The idea, of course, was not his own.[1] Bolingbroke had suggested it to him years before, and had since recalled it to his mind. An increased allowance had already been one of the demands which he had brought before the king in the course of the audience extorted from Walpole.

On this occasion, however, the prince and his adviser had mistaken their ground. They had over-estimated the influence of the heir-apparent and under-estimated the loyalty of the party to their principles. The prince's action was not only an attack upon King George, but also upon the monarchy as such, and for this reason incurred the disfavour both of the opposition Whigs and Tories. The Whigs opposed it because the royal prerogative had been serviceable to their party upon occasion, for which reason they did not wish to see it weakened, while the Tories regarded a parliamentary attempt to interfere with the king's private affairs as incompatible with their conceptions of the royal power. Hence Pulteney and Carteret, the most distinguished leaders of the opposition, advised the prince to give up the attempt, and when he attempted to win over Bubb Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, to his views, he met with a complete refusal and refutation of his views in several long conferences.[2] Walpole was indeed considerably disturbed by the news of this intended proposal. Defeat he considered as highly possible. He thus committed the mistake, which he must afterwards have sorely repented, of inducing the king to send a messenger to the prince making certain concessions.[3] A polite but definite refusal was returned, to the effect that the prince could not go back upon his promises to his friends, and that things would have to take their course.

Throughout this affair, which met with the disapproval of all honourable people, and with the disfavour of the party leaders, the group of the 'boy patriots,' including Pitt, held definitely to the side of the prince. They in any case formed the body of friends upon whom the Prince was anxious to lay the obligation of supporting his action. While others thought of the party welfare or of their principles, these young men were

[1] Thackeray, i. 16.

[2] Cp. *Diary of George Bubb Dodington*, App. i. (London, 1785), where the motives and details of the whole affair are exhaustively discussed.

[3] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 79 f.

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blind to everything but their own interests and their own advancement. Bolingbroke, who was the prime mover in the business, undoubtedly acted from purely selfish motives. He wished to deal a blow at the hated government, careless of the results to the kingdom and the state, and he used the prince for his own purposes. The young patriots were of a very similar opinion. It cannot be said that they were satisfied with the prince's action. So early as October 1735 Lyttelton had seriously attempted to dissuade the prince from his attempts to secure an increased allowance.[1] He had laid stress upon the fact that only the Jacobites would have any interest in supporting such an attempt, for the reason that success would diminish the prestige of the Hanoverian dynasty. He had also attempted to point out that the prospects of the opposition with the nation could only be diminished by the prosecution of selfish monetary interests, and that the prince's popularity would suffer by such excessive demands: he reminded Prince Frederick of his former assertion that he would gladly see his allowance reduced to £300 a year, if the reduction of the national debt were in any way a probable consequence, and he advised him to cling to this disinterested point of view, which could only benefit a cause already just. However, when it appeared that all these warnings produced no effect, all his friends, far from deserting their patron, threw themselves into the prince's cause.

The position of affairs made such action highly attractive. The man who now made common cause with the prince, and fell in with his whims and inclinations, was likely in no long time to reap a rich reward. There was the prospect not only of high position in the prince's household, but also of a brilliant public career in the event of the king's death. It was this latter fact which attracted the boy patriots, especially Lyttelton and Pitt, and entirely determined their attitude. They staked their all upon a single turn of the cards, relying upon the Prince and his succession to the throne to the exclusion of any other possibility. However, George II., far from making room for his son, lived on for another twenty years, and the young men found themselves in consequence in a most unsatisfactory position. The older leaders of the opposition, Pulteney

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 74 ff: letter from Lyttelton to the prince, dated October 12, 1735.

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and Carteret, showed prudence and foresight; they opposed Walpole, but not the king's personal wishes, and declined to give their support to the prince's efforts. Hence, after Walpole's dismissal, they might enter office without difficulty, while Pitt and his friends would remain excluded; indeed, it was only in the time of utmost extremity that the doors of the ministry could open to them. Thus Pitt's attitude at the outset of his parliamentary career became of decisive importance to his political life. It was an attitude founded upon a false hypothesis, which for a long time hampered him greatly and checked the exercise of his brilliant talents.

On this question of the appanage the prince, therefore, insisted on his demands. The empty promises made to him from many quarters, the show of support rendered by the opposition leaders, who naturally could not break with their powerful patron, the pressure of the Jacobites and the adherence of the boy patriots, all confirmed him in the belief that victory was his. Pulteney and Lord Carteret were induced to represent his case in both Houses of Parliament, and on February 23, 1736-7, a motion was brought forward to present an address to the king, praying him to grant to the Prince of Wales £100,000 a year. The opposition speakers in support of the motion were Sir William Wyndham, a Tory and the mouthpiece of Bolingbroke, with the boy patriots, Lyttelton, Grenville, and Pitt. They had been placed in the forefront by the opposition, and consequently bore the entire burden of the disfavour incurred. A majority for the motion would have been secured if all Walpole's opponents had stood by their colours, but no less than forty-five Tories abstained from voting in the House of Commons, and the minister was able to secure a majority of thirty. In the House of Lords the victory was even more decisive. Thus this attempt, which seemed at first likely to make a breach in the government defences, was repulsed, and the consequence was an even deeper dissension between the king and his heir. The speeches delivered on this occasion have not come down to us; their loss, however, is of no very great moment, as the attitude of those concerned is perfectly clear. They would at most have furnished us with some further material for the study of Pitt's oratorical powers. Current opinions upon Pitt's speech are of little value, as they were coloured by

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party interests. It would be interesting, however, to know whether Pitt upon this occasion was able to break away from Lyttelton's influence, and to employ his own special style of oratory.

A newspaper quarrel[1] connected with Pitt's speech is consequently of some value to us. Repeating, as it does, current opinion upon Pitt's character, it provides us with some authentic information concerning his position at that moment, in so far as it confirms established facts. The *Gazetteer*, the organ of the government, began the attack upon the young orator, while the opposition paper, the *Craftsman*, for which Lyttelton wrote, undertook the defence. There was the usual amount of exaggeration upon both sides, but both undeniably founded their arguments upon a basis of fact, the attacking party being careful to emphasise the unfavourable facts, while the defenders put forward what was favourable. Hence it is not difficult to extract the reality and to fill up some of the gaps in our information. The *Gazetteer* asserted that Pitt was attempting to rival Tully, *i.e.* Cicero, for the reason that he possessed his defects, a long neck and a spare figure; but equality of defect did not imply equality of capacity, and his voice was not on that account so harmonious or his gesture so suitable. From this observation we see that Pitt's style of oratory had attracted notice, and was a topic of conversation. In his youth his figure was long and thin, and it was not until 1746 that he gained in breadth.[2] Thus his appearance corresponded to the traditional picture of Cicero; he was careful to support his words by modulation of the voice and suitable gesture, as is demanded of great orators, and no doubt some one or other of his friends had compared him with the famous Roman. To this comparison the critic objects, and emphasises the defects of Pitt's oratory, which no doubt then existed. His art was as yet imperfect, though it gave promise for the future. Upon this point, too, the defence laid principal stress. The *Craftsman* did not dispute the existence of these defects, but it asserted that it was a mistake thus to cast them in the young orator's teeth with the object of deterring him from bringing his talents to perfection. If, the

[1] Almon, i. 15 ff.

[2] George Grenville to his sister Hester, July 31, 1746.—Chatham MSS., Public Record Office.

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argument continues, any one had been successful in persuading Demosthenes to abandon political life on account of his physical defects, how enormous a loss the Athenians would have suffered. No finer compliment could be paid to the rising orator than thus to compare him with this greatest of speakers, nor is the comparison in any way absurd or exaggerated, as he is not compared to Demosthenes in perfection, but the possibility is left open that he might rise to similar eminence. However, these assertions may have been at the bottom of the extravagant praise of Pitt's oratory in its early stages which was uttered by the historian Tindal.

The *Craftsman*, again, speaks of Pitt's cultured and modest behaviour, while the hostile *Gazetteer* informs him that he is only the tool of his party, which will let him drop when he has served their purposes. There is truth in either assertion. Pitt, indeed, as we have already seen, was dependent upon his political environment, and was therefore forced to play a modest part, but his party relations were of so friendly a nature that he need not have feared any causeless abandonment.

Finally, it is noticeable that the *Craftsman* speaks of Pitt's avidity for study, and ventures to hope that his future progress will correspond with his excellent beginning. Pitt was thus obviously working hard at that time to complete the many deficiencies of his education. Many of the studies of which we have spoken in the former section may have been carried out in this time of upward struggle.

The prince's action had considerably widened the breach between himself and his father, a change which was reflected in the constitution of the party which surrounded him. The moderate adherents of the heir-apparent made way for the extremists, among whom Pitt must be included, as the result of the events above detailed. The occasion of this change was a further collision, which was brought about by the prince, and the rights and wrongs of which are not easily ascertainable.[1] When the royal family were gathered in Hampton Court, on the Upper Thames, on July 31, 1737, the Princess of Wales was suddenly taken ill. She was expecting her confinement, but instead of awaiting the event upon the spot, Prince Frederick put his wife into a carriage, declining to listen to

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 81 f.

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any advice, and drove her to St. James's Palace, in London, where a daughter was born on the same night.

Our sources of information are by no means agreed upon the true connection of these events and the prince's reason for his action. It appears to me, especially in view of the assertion of the Duchess of Marlborough,[1] which has hitherto been neglected, that everything had been prepared for the confinement at St. James's, and that the prince and princess wished it to take place there. Whether the parents wished otherwise, or why the stay at Hampton Court was so long protracted, are questions which we cannot answer. The event might have been somewhat premature, but this again is contradicted by the statement in Coxe's *Walpole*[2] that the prince had already on two previous occasions made preparations for his departure. Moreover, statements from Walpole's side are not wholly reliable, as the prince was his political opponent. In any case it is conceivable that the prince and princess did not care to remain in Hampton Court, where no preparation had been made, and that they preferred to hurry to the spot where full arrangements were awaiting them. Such is the motive that the prince put forward to excuse his action. In any case the journey was a somewhat risky undertaking,[3] and the queen, who was the first to follow them, displayed considerable anger at the decision, though she was afterwards appeased, and parted tenderly from her son, as the duchess informs us. The king, however, regarded the whole proceeding as a studied insult to himself. Walpole is supposed to have induced this frame of mind, or to have supported it in order to counterbalance his previous compliance with the prince's wishes; all the son's attempts at excuses were roughly rejected and forbidden, and the breach between father and son was complete and public.

The result was that several of the prince's private officers, who did not wish to be excluded from the Court, felt themselves obliged to resign their posts, among others Henry Pelham, who had acted as private secretary. The vacant places were immediately filled with reliable adherents, and

[1] *Letters of H. Walpole*, ed. Cunningham (London, 1891), i. clv.: Sarah Marlborough to Lord Stair. [2] Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 533 ff.

[3] Bolingbroke stigmatised the whole proceeding as 'boyish.' To Wyndham, October 13, 1737.—Coxe, *Walpole*, iii. 494.

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thus Lyttelton obtained Pelham's post, consequently becoming the prince's official adviser, while Pitt became groom of the bedchamber. Immediately afterwards the persons who waited upon the prince were forbidden to appear at the king's Court, and a separate society was thus set up. The laughable consequences are amusingly described by the Duchess of Queensberry in correspondence with Miss Anna Pitt and Lady Suffolk.[1] A certain Mr. Young dared not visit his daughter because she was in the service of the Princess of Wales, while Miss Anna Pitt was warned against communication with her brother William, as he occupied a position in the prince's household. This, however, was only the duchess's joke. Private communication between the members of the two courts naturally continued as before, and Pitt might have no misgivings in visiting his sister, the queen's maid of honour. It was only from royal receptions that people connected with the prince were excluded. A few days after the baptism the Prince and Princess of Wales were ordered to leave St. James's Palace. They established themselves at first in Kew, on the Upper Thames, and afterwards in Norfolk House, in St. James's Square. The prince's house afterwards became the centre of all the opposition movements and the headquarters of Walpole's adversaries, and among them, as the most faithful adherent of the prince and the strongest antagonist of the king, was William Pitt. Such were the results of his first public appearance, results that might quickly raise him to power if fortune were favourable, and shatter his prospects if she were adverse.

[1] Dropmore MSS.

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CHAPTER VI

THE STRUGGLE WITH WALPOLE

THE post in the Prince of Wales's household which Pitt had secured was not of a kind materially to impede the freedom of his movements. He had certain ceremonial duties to perform when he happened to be at the prince's residence, was obliged to devote some time to court society, and was further bound to serve his master's interests as opportunity offered. Life at the court of the heir-apparent was by no means brilliant at that period, as the prince was cutting down his expenses with the laudable object of reducing his debts.[1] His court, moreover, was affected by the king's edict. Court society proper was obliged to avoid Suffolk House. A reception indeed took place every Wednesday, but was only sparsely attended, and the *jour fixe* of any county lord would have made as much show.[2] At a ball given by the prince at the beginning of January 1739 only five couples were found to dance, including William Pitt with Miss Hamilton, and George Lyttelton with Miss Wyndham,[3] who married George Lyttelton's cousin George Grenville in 1749. Political intrigues offered some compensation for the lack of social life, but for this purpose London and the neighbourhood of St. James's Palace was not the most suitable of places. It was impossible to gain the entire confidence of any one not immediately connected with the prince's court or the prince's circle. Hence the royal couple with their attendants stayed for the most part in the

[1] Cp. Coxe, *Walpole*, iii. 495.

[2] Lady Wentworth to her father: 'Your company will make a greater show in the Square than H. Royal Highness's.'—*The Wentworth Papers*, ed. Cartwright, p. 535. London, 1883.
Lord Wentworth, January 13, 1739: 'The Prince and Princess of Wales have their drawing rooms of Wednesdays as usual, but they have very few coaches.'—*Ibid.*, p. 537.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 542.

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provinces, either upon their own estates or upon those of rich supporters, or in the favourite watering-place of Bath,[1] where the opposition plans of attack were chiefly considered. Bath was an especially favourite centre; social life was less restrained, and the careful reserve incumbent upon all members of the government in London was there unnecessary. The town was regarded, so to speak, as neutral ground. Class distinctions were forgotten, and high officials of state appeared in the company of merchants and artisans. In Bath, where a lord might take an actress upon his arm in public, the barrier dividing the governmental parties was forgotten. The rising star might be greeted without injury to the feelings of a declining power. Thus discussion with opponents was possible; personal influence could be exerted and support secured by favourable promises. The wanderings of the heir-apparent throughout the country, and in particular his stay in this favourite watering-place, must have aroused much popularity, and have been an advantageous preparation for later political action.

It is not certain whether Pitt was permanently attached to the king's personal attendants; upon the whole, we may regard him as the prince's companion, the more so as the places preferred by the prince were also favourites with Pitt. At Lord Cobham's seat in Stowe the two men must have often met under the same roof and discussed party prospects. An anecdote of those visits is preserved, illustrating Pitt's influence upon those with whom he came in contact, and doubtless authentic.[2] The prince and Pitt are said to have been walking in the garden apart from the general company. As they were in earnest conversation Lord Cobham expressed his apprehension to one of his guests that Pitt would draw the prince into some undesirable course of action. The guest observed that the *tête-à-tête* could not be of long duration, to which Lord Cobham eagerly replied, 'Sir, you do not know Mr. Pitt's talent for insinuation; in a very short quarter of an hour he can persuade any one of anything.' We afterwards find Pitt with the royal couple at Clifden,[3] in Buckinghamshire, and he doubtless accompanied the prince to Bath, as he

[1] Cp. Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 84.
[2] Thackeray, i. 16, note; from Butler's *Reminiscences*.
[3] *Grenville Papers*, ed. 1852, i., under date September 1742.

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found the waters very beneficial to his own health. The cheerful Dr. Cheyne, an old man of invincible vitality and good temper, who asserted his intention of living another two hundred years, is said to have treated him, and to have worried him with a special dietary. 'The Doctor,' wrote Lyttelton to Pope,[1] 'is the most eccentric and delightful man I have ever seen; I am not his patient, but I intend to become his pupil, for I am reading a pamphlet of his, in which he puts together everything that is beneficial to body and soul.' From Lyttelton's letters we also learn that the prince made a considerable stay on the estate of Lord Bathurst, who was one of his friends, at Cirencester, in Gloucestershire.[2] Whether Pitt, like Lyttelton, was a member of the party we are not told. He may have remained in Bath, which was close by, during that time.

Thus during these years of his life Pitt was first and foremost a courtier. The performance of courtly functions and the representation of the prince's interests occupied most of his energies. In the House of Commons, indeed, he rejected the idea that his office bound him politically to vote in certain directions,[3] and he had undoubtedly given no formal promise to this effect. He was, on the contrary, seriously attempting to preserve his political independence and to strengthen his knowledge of political affairs by study. At the same time the courtly atmosphere he was breathing, the tone of the society in which he lived, and the conventions to which he had to conform, cannot have remained without influence upon his developing sympathies and intellect. Highly as he might estimate his own powers, and widely as he was able to turn them to account, he yet retained for years the consciousness and the conviction that he had been enabled to grasp the reins of power, not merely by his own capacity, but by the prince's favour; he learned to regard himself as a favourite, and the power which he hoped would raise him to eminence inspired him with a veneration to which indeed he had been predisposed by his education at home and at Oxford. His respect

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 126.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 122.

[3] Speech of February 1739: '. . . but I should think otherwise [should not be proud of my office] were I not as free to give my opinion upon any question that happens in this house, as I was before I possessed such place. . . .'—Thackeray, i. 22 f.

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and devotion to the throne, even in late years, was of an intensity most remarkable in the enthusiastic champion of the national rights, of the constitution, and of the Whig principles. It was the outcome of the impressions of his youth, and was not merely actuated by the interests of the moment.

The event, however, that might open the doors of government, the king's death, did not come to pass, and it therefore remained for him to carry on the struggle against the favourite of the moment, Walpole. This alternative involved the advantage of enabling Pitt to perfect his oratorical powers, and to lay the foundations of that honourable position which he was to occupy as the great Commoner; this empty fame was, however, a petty matter in comparison with the training in the art of administration, and the political insight which might have been his had he entered the state service at an earlier period. It was not his oratory that enabled him to perform real service to the state; this was only the means that brought him to power, and enabled him to surmount all obstacles, and even the will of the sovereign. His need of that means would have been less if the direct and desirable path had not been closed.

The struggle with Walpole was resumed at a moment when the minister's position seemed highly doubtful.[1] On November 20, 1737, Queen Caroline died. She had concealed her sufferings from her attendants and her doctors until recovery was impossible, and her decease was therefore somewhat unexpected. Her last days had been embittered by the quarrels with her son, which had reached their culminating point a short time previously. It was not the case, as has long been maintained, that she declined to forgive her son to the hour of her death or refused to see him. Nor did the son intentionally hold aloof. On the contrary, both the queen and the prince earnestly desired a last meeting.[2] The queen repeatedly recommended the prince to the consideration of Robert Walpole, who was with her towards the end, while the prince made the most desperate efforts to gain permission to cast himself at his mother's feet. The king, however, was inexorable. Not content with the

[1] On the course of events, see especially Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole* (London, 1798), i., and Mahon, *History of England*.

[2] Prussian embassy reports of November 26 and December 12, 1737.

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submission offered, he sent a demand through Lord North, to the effect that the prince should dismiss his friends, Lyttelton in particular, but also Pitt. Prince Frederick declined to make this concession, and access to his mother's death-bed was therefore denied him. The queen's death was a severe blow to the minister, who owed his position chiefly to her influence, and the opposition forthwith made preparations to take advantage of the new situation.[1] When the queen's illness was announced, Chesterfield advised his friends to begin their attack upon Walpole immediately after the queen's death, as if his power were already broken, since the spread of that theory of its origin would prove advantageous.[2] The more strongly they attacked the more rapidly would his supporters diminish. Thus the parliamentary session of the winter of 1737-8 was marked by violent attacks upon the government, in which Pitt took a vigorous part. Pitt's family was also affected by the queen's death, for Miss Anna Pitt lost her position as maid of honour. She had indeed never been in sympathy with the party in power, but the outward tie was now broken which had hitherto united her to the Court, and the possibility of a conflict of duties was obviated for the future.

For a due appreciation of the succeeding events it must be carefully remembered that the different opposition groups were pursuing very different ends, and that they were united upon one point only, the necessity of overthrowing Walpole, who was an obstacle to each one of them alike. However, as regards the prince, the situation was somewhat different. He was anxious to play a political part and to cause trouble and inconvenience to his father, who withheld the allowance he required, and checked his liberty in many directions. For this purpose he was obliged to make use of the opposition to thwart the prime minister, who represented the king's interests; hence the alliance between himself and the patriots. He had no particular objection to Walpole in person, and had he come to the throne, he might have retained him in office as George II. had done upon his own accession. At that date

[1] Report of Prussian embassy of December 17, 1737: 'les frondeurs regardent la mort de la Reine comme si leurs antagonistes avaient perdu l'élite de leurs forces; et que présentement la victoire ne saurait leur manquer.'—Berlin Archives.

[2] Chesterfield to Lyttelton, November 12, 1737.—Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 87.

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the struggle between the king and the heir-apparent which had preceded the change in the succession had been no obstacle. It is probable that Walpole's capacity and administrative experience would have been more useful to King Frederick than the enthusiastic services of Pitt, who was at bottom somewhat obstinate, and was rather an orator than an administrator; the favourite would hardly have overthrown the minister, and would at most have taken his place upon his death or resignation. Thus the prince opposed Walpole, not because he was the minister of the state, but because he was his father's servant. His father's death would remove all grounds of opposition.

On the other hand the patriots were interested in securing the overthrow of Walpole for no other reason than to gain a share in the government for themselves. They had no intention of reducing the king's power, and were anxious indeed to harm his position as little as possible. Thus, when Carteret supported the prince's demand for an increased allowance, he excused his action to the queen on the ground that Walpole declined to allow him any share in the administration, and that he was consequently forced into opposition.[1] The action of the patriots was thus directed expressly against Walpole, not against the king. This, however, was by no means the whole truth. Had there been no other elements in the situation, the patriots would readily have held aloof from a measure of which they did not approve, but they found the support of the prince too valuable to venture any opposition to his desires. The prince was a powerful ally by reason of his prestige, his popularity, and his parliamentary influence, but his aims were not theirs. Bolingbroke recognised these facts in writing to Lyttelton in May 1740; he pointed out that the patriots' efforts were directed merely to replacing one faction by another, instead of founding a new system upon a broader and more patriotic basis. The personal hostility between the prince and his father was entirely contrary to the wishes of the opposition leaders; their co-operation with the prince was unavoidable, but at the same time it made them the object of the king's aversion, and their prospects of attaining power were correspondingly diminished. From this point of view they showed their disfavour of the appanage bill and

[1] Ballantyne, *Lord Carteret*, p. 182.

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their indignation at the removal of the princess from Hampton Court. Hence Chesterfield's advice to the prince, to show himself respectful to his parents, and to insist upon his full dignity only with reference to the minister. They could not have desired a complete understanding with the king, as this might easily have included Walpole, and have further strengthened him in office, but at the same time they did not wish dissension to run too far. Thus the ultimate objects of the prince and of the opposition leaders, while permitting some temporary co-operation, were fundamentally opposed, a difference which might easily lead to a breach between them.

We have already seen that the boy patriots, especially Lyttelton and Pitt, were in other relations with the prince than those adopted by the true patriots. Lyttelton and Pitt hoped to secure promotion from the prince when he should become king, and also to gain some remunerative post at the moment through his agency as head of the united opposition parties. They represented the ideas of Bolingbroke, the abolition of party divisions, and the coalition of all who were anxious for their country's welfare around the prince as their future patriot king. At the same time it must be noticed that however strongly Pitt supported the prince, and however little he attempted to check his opposition to his father, yet the overthrow of Walpole was a far more important object to him than to the prince. The minister's undeniable powers of statesmanship, his administrative experience, his parliamentary adroitness, and his dignified oratory formed dangerous obstacles to Pitt, both in the present reign and for the reign to come. Pitt was ambitious to be supreme, and felt himself Walpole's rival. He cared no more for the prince personally than Walpole did for the king; like the minister, he was attempting to turn prevailing conditions to the best account with the object of securing supremacy. He was a young man and had nothing to expect from the aged king; he therefore clung to the heir, while Walpole naturally supported the occupant of the throne, and put off explanations with the heir-apparent until some future date, hoping, in case of accession, to be able to show himself indispensable. If Pitt, therefore, was to destroy his adversary's future prospects, he was bound to make the best possible use of opportunities

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as they presented themselves, of the prince's aversion to the king's minister, and of the hatred of all the opposition groups to the despotic wielder of power; in this way Walpole might be discredited, and his government be definitely overthrown. Thus Pitt's attack upon the minister bears a somewhat embittered character as the onslaught of a fierce rival, a character not to be explained by mere devotion to the prince. Other motives too co-operated, as we shall afterwards see.

Pitt had neither means nor influence; if his attack had force and efficacy, if it inspired respect for himself, his oratorical powers were the sole cause. This, therefore, is the point at which we must begin a closer examination of those powers. Whatever the course of their development, and it was a development that never ceased, yet Pitt's oratory bears, like the mind from which it sprang, certain definite and prominent features; a knowledge of these will enable us to understand the nature and importance of his speeches, and so obviate the necessity of returning to the point when later oratorical changes and modifications become manifest.

A perusal of the estimates of Pitt's oratory, to be found in contemporary narratives and in more modern works,[1] shows a certain contrast between the general praise accorded to him as an orator and our positive information concerning his eloquence. He is generally represented as an orator superior not only to his most famous countrymen, but at least comparable with the most famous orators of all times; on the other hand these claims, which could only be advanced for really first-rate eloquence, are but partially substantiated by such detailed information upon his art as we possess. The nature of these claims and the chief task of oratory have been already examined at length.[2] We saw that the orator's purpose was to persuade a large number of people to adopt a certain point of view and to undertake certain measures. The means to this end are both intellectual and physical. The physical or external means include the orator's personal appearance, his bearing and behaviour, and the various

[1] The main sources are: Charles Butler, *Reminiscences*, i. 139; Earl Waldegrave, *Memoirs*, p. 15 f. (London, 1821); Mahon, *History of England*, iii. 12 ff.; Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 467 ff.; Coxe, *Memoirs of H. Walpole*, ii. 352 f.; Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, i. 93 f. and 175, ed. Lord Holland.

[2] P. 85 ff. *supra.*

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artifices which he may use, his voice, the form of his oratory, his style and choice of words, etc. To the intellectual means belong illuminating judgments, suitable arguments, inspiring warnings, apposite illustrations and comparisons, and much else forming part of the contents of a speech proper. To a certain extent neither element can be excluded if a speech is to be effective, though the intellectual side is certainly the more important, as by it alone educated and thoughtful hearers may be won over, whereas physical advantages are of high though not of exclusive importance for influencing the less intellectual or merely impulsive masses.

It is therefore remarkable that these physical advantages were regarded in the case of Pitt, upon the universal testimony of all writers, as of chief importance, and are the constant subject of their enthusiastic praise. His tall and handsome figure, which gradually lost its disagreeable thinness as years went by, made an imposing impression, which was increased by the careful attention he paid to dress. His personal appearance was intended to produce its effect, and even the outward signs of his ill-health, his bandages and his crutch, were used in after years to increase the impression. They were to express the importance and the importunity of the cause he represented which had brought him to the House of Parliament from his sick-bed, and were also to emphasise his self-sacrificing patriotism. His attitude, his gestures, his movements, and his glance united geniality with dignity, though dignity was predominant. It was, however, the flashing eye which made the strongest impression upon his contemporaries; its glow could excite his audience and win them to his cause, while its devastating glance could terrify and confound. The agreement of all writers upon this point, and the emphasis which they lay upon the power of Pitt's look, proves that his glance must really have had something extraordinary and fascinating about it. It must have had an expression which, as Lecky observes, gave the appearance of high inspiration, and could spread inexplicable terror in the moment of angry outburst or of stern reproof. Our existing portraits do not show this special advantage; it can only be seen that his eyes were large and penetrating, as is often the case with strong characters placed in high position.

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His fine voice is praised as a further advantage—his words resounded clear and penetrating. If he exerted himself to the full he so filled the House that no one could escape his influence; at the same time the equable tone of calm and gentle explanation enchained attention, which was often so intense, while his clearness of articulation was so great, that even his gentlest whisper could be felt and at times produced the deepest effect. The constant and often unexpected changes between these extremes, the rich modulations of tone which he could adroitly use, gave his voice a seductive power which overwhelmed even those who were ordinarily the most matter-of-fact hearers. The impression was all the greater as this change of tone seemed quite natural, and no exertion in the orator was to be noticed, although the acquisition of this skill must have cost him great trouble.

Pitt's style, especially as regards his choice of words and his use of the period, had been brought to a high degree of perfection. To this point he had, indeed, devoted a severe course of self-education. In accordance with his character and his capacities he preferred a vigorous and lofty style, which was at the same time perfectly clear, owing to his choice of the most striking and suitable words and expressions. We have before mentioned the studies he had pursued to attain this object. At times his rhetoric flowed from him like a majestic stream, the words seemed to fall spontaneously in rhythmical order, clothing the orator's thoughts with brilliant and noble form, though often the language would become irregular with rapid transitions and sudden interruptions, resembling an eager conversation carried on in elevated style. Humour and attraction were to be found when it was necessary to arouse a feeling of sympathy in the audience, though any undue hilarity in his hearers was always kept in check by a background of seriousness. Upon the whole he moved upon a higher level than had been traditional in Parliament, and this fact, notwithstanding his scanty claims to position, soon procured him the respect and fear of the assembly.

We have now to remember that all these advantages, whatever their value and however praiseworthy, were nothing more than external. Their true value consisted or should have consisted in the fact that they secured proper influence and

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prepared the way for intellectual advantages. Personal appearance, look, voice, and delivery should be concentrated solely upon the task of impressing the subject-matter of the speech upon the audience, and of securing greater receptivity on their part. The value of these externals is entirely dependent upon the content of the speech, which should be sufficiently important and inspiring to be worthy of delivery, and should be composed of or at any rate contain ideas of real service in furthering the interests supported. At this most important point the weakness of Pitt's speeches becomes apparent.

We certainly cannot venture to say that his speeches were unimportant as regards their content. In this respect, indeed, their merit is worthy of high praise. They contributed not a little to the due appreciation of given situations, and to the estimation of personalities, institutions, and affairs. Some of Pitt's judgments, delivered in this connection, became the common property of the nation. Lecky has collected some of these, referring to Magna Carta, to the employment of Indians in warfare, to the personal freedom of Englishmen, and to the Anglican Church, though these belonged to Pitt's later period. In this respect Pitt's cleverness in finding apposite and striking comparisons was a great advantage. An instance is that well-known passage above-mentioned in which he compares the alliance of the Duke of Newcastle and Henry Fox with the confluence of the peaceful Saone and the rushing Rhone. That he was invariably right in his conclusions we could hardly assert without qualification, notwithstanding the general assent to their justness. Many of these points we reserve for future discussion. It must also be admitted that Pitt was able to clothe his thoughts in ornate and tasteful language, and so to make them acceptable, but this is an advantage affecting the form rather than the content of his speeches. More important is his power of rational and energetic pursuit of the objects he had in view, and of dealing sharp and clever thrusts at his adversaries. He speedily discovered the weak points in their armour and turned the full force of his attack upon those spots. It was by no means only the interests of the state that he served by these methods; his own and his party interests claimed much of his attention: at the same time he constantly used

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his oratorical power in support of the general welfare. Nor must it be forgotten, indeed it is a point of the utmost importance for the explanation of his oratorical success, that Pitt was an energetic statesman, able to act as well as to speak. The fact was well-known to his audience. They felt a reserve of power behind his words which very materially increased their effect. This, however, is a personal and not an oratorical quality, and need not concern us here, when we are attempting to discover the nature of Pitt's oratorical power.

Hence it is plain that Pitt's speeches were by no means despicable as regards their content, and that in this respect they were often admirable, while at the same time the excellence of their matter was inferior to the excellence of their form. It is noteworthy that contemporary praises diminish and become conventional appreciation when the matter of Pitt's speeches is called in question. Their matter was 'apparently simple'; such is the account given by Charles Butler after a long description of glance, manner, etc., and he immediately proceeds to discuss the admirable language which clothed the thought. 'He was by no means a fair and conclusive reasoner,' observes Lord Waldegrave, and proceeds forthwith to describe the impression made by Pitt's appearance upon his audiences. 'If he attempted to reason,' writes Horace Walpole, 'the result was failure.' Historians also have been able to do no more than soften the unfavourable judgments upon this point. Lord Mahon writes that Pitt often preferred ridicule to argument; elsewhere he observes that Pitt's extempore speeches were his best, and that those he prepared were defective in comparison. From this it is obvious that the matter of the speech, for the proper arrangement and exposition of which preparation is essential, was in Pitt's case the least effective element, whereas a decisive power was exerted by those external qualities which were most strongly obvious when he spoke without premeditation. Similarly, Lecky finds the content of his speeches extremely defective, though in other respects he has nothing but praise to bestow. Pitt was not, according to him, pre-eminent like his son in carefully elaborated proof, nor was he, like Fox, a past-master of debate nor a philosopher like Burke; he had not the glowing fancy and the inventive sarcasm of Canning

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but on the other hand he had—and then we are treated to an enumeration of his offensive power and his outward advantages.[1]

These judgments are derived either from personal acquaintance or from first-hand authority: they have been well considered, and are generally consistent. If, therefore, in view of them, we examine the speeches themselves, which in their present defective form are more valuable for their matter than for their style, we shall be forced to recognise that upon this most important point of content Pitt's oratory does not entirely deserve the praises that have been lavished upon it. He was especially deficient in depth of thought and clearness of perception. And his most valuable arguments were in many cases not his own. Indeed his intellectual powers and his knowledge were considerably inferior to that creative power and energy of will which are after all the most important attributes of a statesman. His arguments as such are rarely overwhelming. They are chiefly directed to the injury and overthrow of his opponents, and to placing his own opinion in a favourable light, and not so much to providing a firm basis for that opinion. He often devotes an exhaustive treatment to side issues in the hope of diverting the public view from the real point. By bringing the whole majestic power of his appearance and his delivery to bear he often succeeded in clothing his own highly disputable theories with outward convincingness, and in investing himself with the halo of an invincible conqueror. There was something intentionally theatrical in his attitude and bearing, a fact which has struck every observer and is universally admitted. Lecky very justly compares him with the famous contemporary actor Garrick, and praises Pitt for the fact that in dignity and attractive power he was not inferior to Garrick. The general view, however, assumes that the great orator's dramatic powers were used, perhaps in too pronounced a form, as a support to his rhetorical gifts; with this view we cannot agree. On the contrary, the rhetorical power was

[1] Franklin afterwards declared that in the course of his life he had sometimes seen eloquence without wisdom, and often wisdom without eloquence; in Lord Chatham only had he seen both united. As regards the observation it must be remembered that Chatham supported the Americans, and that consequently what seemed certain to them might not necessarily appear so to others. Moreover, my general judgment of the value of Pitt's speeches is to be understood only in relation to their form.

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rather subordinate to his theatrical talent and tendencies. This indeed was the means which Pitt most constantly and successfully used. He produced the impression of a man enthusiastic, carried away and overwhelmed by the greatness of his idea and the strength of his arguments, and in this way he was able to inspire his audience with a similar enthusiasm and a similar credulous conviction. He consequently not infrequently suffered the fate of the actor, and was obliged to expend his powers upon some unworthy part. The effect of this oratory was not permanent, nor did it influence in any great degree the more intelligent and experienced members of his audience; hence the eventual result remained doubtful. He was often a thorn in the side of his adversaries by reason of his clever attacks and by his ruthless exposure of their weakness; he produced the conviction that he was able by mere force of will to extricate the state from the most difficult complications; he was able to inspire confidence in that moral uprightness which he actually possessed, and which was at that date only too rare, but he was able to make comparatively few converts to the arguments contained in his speeches. The fact that he was always outvoted while in opposition was due to party constitution and party conditions, but the greatness of the majority on many occasions, in spite of his brilliant speeches, may be ascribed to the weakness of his arguments and the deficiency of his efforts. In this respect he was undoubtedly no match for so experienced an administrator as Robert Walpole, or for so keen a lawyer as Lord Mansfield, with whom he had many a pitched battle.

This is in no degree a matter for surprise. Pitt's career as a whole suffered from the fact that his fine talents for administration and organisation had never been exercised in his younger and more vigorous days, and that he had never found opportunity to develop these powers by practice, and to gain a deeper insight into the various branches of administration. This was a disadvantage for which his unimportant post at court and his parliamentary duties offered very inadequate compensation; and its reality may be understood by the perusal of such a work as the admirable biography of Stein by Max Lehmann.[1] There the reader may observe the

[1] Max Lehmann, *Freiherr vom Stein*, i. and ii., Leipsic, 1902 and 1903.

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process by which a really great man is trained, the numerous departments in which he is continually extending his knowledge and experience, and laying a sure foundation for the exercise of statesmanship in the true sense of the term, as applied to the guidance of a state. To so comprehensive and productive a course of development Pitt's early career has not the smallest similarity. His best years were spent in the struggle to secure his footing, in opposing and overthrowing the reasoned policy of others in order to secure power for himself. The nature of the British constitution made it possible for a man to reach the highest position by his own efforts; Pitt was seduced by this possibility; his eyes were fixed immovably upon that goal, and in his efforts to attain it he cast away his opportunities of gaining a thorough practical training in the business of the state. In my opinion, the most remarkable point in Pitt's career is the rapidity with which, notwithstanding his lack of training, he made himself acquainted with the business of the high offices with which he was afterwards entrusted. The explanation of this fact will appear in its proper place. But his deficiencies were constantly obvious in his speeches.

We have already seen that Pitt's first speech upon the prince's affairs aroused considerable attention, and even excited the prime minister to strong action against the young politician, though it did not raise him to the first rank of the orators of his party. Lyttelton was still regarded as the more important speaker, and Pitt as a follower in his footsteps. In the forthcoming parliamentary struggle with Walpole Pitt is not as yet a leading figure. He readily grasped any opportunity of announcing his agreement with the arguments of the opposition, of throwing new light upon conclusions already formulated, and presenting these under fresh and original forms, but an opposition champion he certainly was not. At the same time his services were welcome and valuable to his party; whatever the question at issue he was unswerving in his opposition to the government, and was especially skilful at striking the tone of argument calculated to arouse public opinion, that most dangerous of adversaries to Walpole's policy.

The minister's position was at that moment extraordinarily difficult. He had to protect the state against menaces at

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home and abroad, and to steer his way through a thousand reefs and shoals: at the same time he had to defend the existing government and his own position against the bitterest attacks. Whatever the fidelity, the skill or courage with which he grasped the helm, he met hostility, contempt, and abuse at every turn. Every possible obstacle was thrown in the way of measures entirely reasonable, and the minister was then reproached with incompetence upon their failure. At the same time his adversaries were fully aware that his measures were reasonable, well-considered, and scarce capable of improvement. Walpole's measures were attacked not because they were bad, but because they were his, and because his opponents desired his downfall. Such, at any rate, was the attitude of the opposition leaders, though the rank and file of their supporters may have been honestly convinced by their arguments. I have already attempted to explain the attitude of the various opposition groups towards the government and their individual lines of policy.

Walpole's chief efforts were directed to establishing the somewhat precarious footing of the reigning dynasty upon a firm and immovable basis; at the same time he wished to secure greater economic prosperity for the state, though it was a prosperity which would chiefly benefit the classes in political power. These two objects, as he had correctly observed, were interdependent. If the dynasty became firmly rooted, the country would flourish, and if trade and commerce became prosperous, the nation would be entirely opposed to any further revolution, and the dynasty would consequently have nothing to fear. Hence Walpole devoted great attention to economic problems, and many admirable laws and institutions in this department were due to him; upon occasions when the energy of the opposition flagged, he was able to make useful progress. But for both purposes peace, and peace of the longest possible duration, was indispensable. The whole of his work would be endangered by war. War would destroy prosperity, check progress, and produce dissatisfaction as a natural consequence, while it might also bring about some unforeseen conjuncture of events resulting in the downfall of the dynasty which he was carefully protecting. However favourable the prospects of a war, the profit to be secured by a possible victory was far outweighed by the enormous loss which would

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follow a defeat or even a protracted and complicated struggle. Thus Walpole, with sure and practised hand, strove to disperse every cloud that gathered upon the horizon, and would doubtless have succeeded in this laudable ambition had he not been systematically thwarted by the opposition. And in his attempts to preserve peace it was indisputably a rational policy to increase the military power of the state, to improve the standing army, and to strengthen the personnel and the efficiency of the fleet.

Spain was at that time the chief menace to peace, or, more correctly, the use made of certain friction with Spain by the English opposition. In the Introduction I have already adverted to the respective positions of England and Spain in the Spanish districts of America. The English carried on a smuggling trade upon the coast and founded settlements upon Spanish territory for the purposes of the lumber trade; the Spaniards attempted to suppress these proceedings by the use of coast-guard ships (*guardacostas*) and by other measures of the kind. It cannot be denied that the English were formally in the wrong, though for so enterprising a maritime nation the temptation was irresistible to trade with a district affording a large and ready market and willing to pay high prices. The English government, to justify the position and to keep the peace, was bound to make concessions even beyond the requirements of international law. If unable to restrain its subjects from illegal action, the government could not cry out too loudly should the Spaniards exact retributions from law-breakers when captured. The injury suffered by the Spaniards was, upon the whole, incomparably greater than that occasionally inflicted upon innocent English traders. Generally speaking, the punishment with which the English were threatened was well deserved, and intending smugglers were bound to consider beforehand the risk they ran. The only just course of policy for the government was to make the best possible terms with the Court at Madrid, and then to disavow illegal actions by English subjects: to offer protection to an illegal trade was most unseemly, and the numerous advantages which English traders illegally enjoyed could only have been legalised at the cost of war to the knife.

The adoption by Walpole of this rational course of policy was enough to evoke the strongest censure from the opposition,

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including Pitt. Walpole represented the cause of armed peace, which formed the sole guarantee for the stability of the dynasty, and for the continuance of economic progress and productive trade, even in Spanish America. The opposition, including Pitt, spoke and voted against military expenditure, cried aloud for war, and thus to some extent held a brief for war unarmed. Walpole was successful in securing a compromise with Spain, which the opposition attempted to reject. Sensible measures were habitually opposed and thwarted by them, while the blind passions of the nation were fomented to the utmost.

Pitt afterwards conducted the greatest war of that age, and vigorously supported the war policy at the present moment; it is therefore interesting to find him advocating a reduction in the numbers of troops on the occasion of a debate of February 1738, which dealt with a vote of expenditure upon the standing army. Walpole asked for supplies for 17,400 men, a number which the opposition wished to reduce to 12,000. The minister had cleverly explained the necessity of keeping a number of comparatively efficient troops on foot, had dwelt upon the numbers of the country's enemies, and referred in particular to the secret Jacobite parties, the numbers of which would remain unknown until the outbreak of disturbances. From the existence of a pretender to the throne, whose claims would be supported by a large proportion of the nation, he deduced the inevitable necessity of defensive measures. Every foreseeing man was well aware that Walpole spoke the truth, and his assertions were justified by later events. Immediately upon the outbreak of the war with Spain the wide ramifications of the conspiracy were brought to a head, and shortly after Walpole's fall the revolt began which shook the English state to its foundations. Thus the opposition should have had every reason for supporting the minister, the more so as they were clamouring for a foreign war, for which the troops would have been available. Hence they had some difficulty in finding arguments to support their opposition. The chief speakers, Shippen, Hynde Cotton, Pulteney, Lord Polwarth, and George Lyttelton, brought forward every possible argument which might evoke the national feeling, insisting especially upon the inconsistency of a standing army with Whig principles, and upon the

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dangers with which the national freedom and the constitution were threatened by the existence of such an army. These were utterly hackneyed arguments, but were not without effect. No interest and no group, exclaimed Lord Polwarth, which needs a standing army is deserving of support. The influence of the nation in the councils of Europe, said Lyttelton, with greater emphasis than truth, is dependent not upon troops, but upon wise diplomacy and unity between king and people. The support given by Pitt was of very precarious nature.[1] He simply denied the existence of these numerous enemies, without giving reasons for his statement, and coolly asserted that the standing army was the sole cause of the existing dissatisfaction; if the army were disbanded or somewhat reduced, its help would be found unnecessary. We may ask whether Pitt realised the senselessness of this proposal brought forward with the serious solemnity habitual to him. How was the dismissal of a few thousand men to heal the deep breach which divided the nation? Pitt should have proposed the abolition of the whole institution of a standing army, but he did not venture to draw this final conclusion from Whig principles, as it was inconsistent with the proposals of his party. By way of a further contribution to the debate he proceeded to enlarge upon a side issue. It had been observed upon the ministerial side that difficulties would arise from the dismissal of the officers and soldiers on service, and that the provision for their future would occasion further expense. To this Pitt replied that the officers should be satisfied with their half-pay, and that as most of the soldiers had never been on active service, the country was under no obligation to them: his view may have been correct, but in any case this was a detail of so little consequence in comparison with the point at issue as not to be worth discussion. The speech was delivered in support of an unworthy cause, and upon the whole was somewhat of a failure and added little to his reputation. Even Thackeray, who is usually loud in his eulogiums, felt himself bound to note the defects of the speech as regarding its energy of thought and expression. Pitt afterwards made another attempt to defeat a proposal for increasing the defensive forces, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

[1] The speech is printed in Thackeray, i. 22 ff., and *Parliamentary History*, x. 464 ff.

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The main struggle between Walpole and his opponents, a struggle in which Pitt also took part, centred about his convention with Spain. In pursuance of the policy outlined above, the minister had begun negotiations with the Court of Madrid in 1738. He was confronted by obstacles of the utmost conceivable magnitude. The proud and sensitive Spaniards were very averse to concession of any kind, public opinion in England excited by Walpole's opponents was continually suspicious of humiliation and national dishonour, while the problem for solution was unusually complicated, inasmuch as the interests of the government and of the independent traders could not be detached from the interests of the privileged South Sea Company. Intrigues were carried on between the Spanish ambassadors and the opposition behind Walpole's back, which steadily thwarted and endangered his prospects of success. Moreover, the time at Walpole's disposal was limited, for if his plan was to succeed he would have to lay the convention completed and duly signed before Parliament during the winter session of 1738-9. Walpole's accomplishment of his task by January 1739 must be regarded under the circumstances as a masterpiece of diplomacy; that he had been forced to make larger concessions to the Court of Madrid than he had originally intended was no matter for reproach in view of the hostile attitude of the opposition and the restricted time at his disposal. The convention did not decide the terms of a final settlement, but it paved the way to a peaceful solution of the difficulty: the points at issue were to be submitted to a court of arbitration, which was to sit for no longer period than eight months. Spain also agreed to pay £95,000 compensation for injury inflicted upon British subjects, though acknowledgment and payment of a debt was demanded, owed by the South Sea Company to the Spanish Crown, and amounting to £68,000.

This incomplete but highly promising arrangement was now laid before Parliament for confirmation. Any one who bore in mind the many obstacles in the way and regarded the agreement from a sensible point of view could not fail to express his satisfaction with the result, and to give his support to the future efforts for which this agreement was a basis; on the other hand, any one devoted solely to the task of discrediting the minister, and ready to plunge the nation into war,

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regardless of consequences, could easily find a number of weaknesses open to the attacks of destructive criticism. The diplomatist Horace Walpole defended his brother's work with great skill, though somewhat too obviously veiling the weak points of the convention. In a speech of two hours and a half he brought forward every possible argument in its favour, showing, firstly, that the national honour was preserved; secondly, that compensation for aggression had been granted; and, thirdly, that security for the future had been guaranteed. Especially noteworthy was his argument that the national honour could be endangered only by the representatives of the state, and not by the aggression of unauthorised individuals; in the latter case moderate compensation was all that could be demanded. He proceeded to make the very reasonable assertion that it was better to put off war for eight months with a prospect of avoiding it altogether, than to begin hostilities at a moment which, as he explained in detail, was highly unfavourable.

The convention was, however, by no means so honourable or unexceptionable as Horace attempted to prove. The amount of compensation granted was unmistakable evidence of a very concessive attitude on the part of England. No less a sum than £45,000 had been surrendered in order to secure an immediate cash payment in place of doubtful bills of exchange. However, the orator was not concerned to establish the truth, which would have impressed only a scanty number of far-sighted individuals; his business was to secure the consent of Parliament to a necessary measure. Hence it was necessary to pave the way for the supporters of the government, and to supply them with reasons which they could use to justify their assent. To win over the opposition or to avert their violent attacks was an impossible undertaking in any case. These attacks were delivered in the customary and expected manner on March 8, 1739.

Pitt boldly followed several other speakers to the onslaught.[1] The manner in which the subject had been introduced gave him an opportunity of criticism. The House was to accept the convention by means of a simple vote of thanks, without proper examination, as though merely dealing with the ordinary accounts of some commissary. Here Pitt touched the weak

[1] Speech in Thackeray, i. 27 f., and *Parliamentary History*, x. 1280 ff.

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spot in the ministerial procedure. In order the more easily to secure the assent of Parliament, Horace Walpole had proposed the form of address, and this device was now exposed and stigmatised. Pitt was less happy in his attempts to refute the ministerial arguments. He rejected the idea that war might involve England in serious danger, principally through a coalition of the Bourbon powers. The Spaniards, he asserted, with the audacity of ignorance, were the nation afraid of the consequences of war, which they knew, however, would be avoided by England. The true state of affairs was very different. An acceptable compromise had only been secured by a final resort to threats of war and to military preparations, and the Spaniards were by no means convinced that England would keep the peace: Walpole, however, could not exert more than a moderate pressure on this side, for the reason that Spanish moderation had its limits. The Spanish sword was even more ready to leap from the scabbard, and Pitt's opinion was thus mistaken upon this point also. The speaker then dwelt upon the necessity for immediate action, as the enemy's strength would only be increased by delay; he made an effective appeal to the national pride. 'Is this any longer an English Parliament,' he cried, 'if with more ships in your harbours than in all the navies of Europe, with above two millions of people in your American colonies, you will bear to hear of the expediency of receiving from Spain an insecure, unsatisfactory, dishonourable convention?' This was a fine sounding phrase, and doubtless awoke an answer in many hearts, but it was sentiment and not statesmanship. Moderation and due consideration of fact need not have been excluded by the consciousness of strength. It would be time enough to lay stress upon that strength when war was inevitable. The rest of the speech was a sharp criticism of the details of the convention, and is hardly worth analysis here. Pitt's arguments were based on somewhat arbitrary hypotheses, the soundness of which was guaranteed only by the vigour of their enunciation. He asserted that English sailors were continually subjected to illegal examinations, confiscations, privateering robberies, and ill-treatment. The authenticity of these statements was confirmed by the stories of sailors, and by one-sided reports written by Englishmen; hence it was easy for Pitt to stigmatise the passive policy of

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the government as weak and dishonourable. He professed full knowledge of the underhand and evil intentions of Spain, and his description must have stirred the blood of every patriotic Englishman. 'Spain seems to say,' so runs the passage, 'we will treat with you, but we will search and take your ships; we will sign a convention, but we will keep your subjects prisoners in Old Spain; the West Indies are remote; Europe shall witness in what manner we use you.' This was again an appeal to sentiment, not to intellect. In the manner of the true demagogue, he strove to urge his auditors to inconsiderate action by cutting phrases, arousing a sense of insult which had no foundation in fact. The conclusion of the speech was occupied by considerations of the right of search which the Spaniards frequently exercised: the speaker asserted that a bare admission of the existence of this right was an unpardonable weakness. Formally Pitt was in the right. To stop foreign ships on the high seas and to search for Spanish goods was indisputably an act of aggression; but it was not to be expected that Spain would quietly see her laws broken and her customs regulations evaded under the protection of international custom, which was presumably based upon upright dealing. It was impossible to admit the right of search, which was tantamount to insult; it seemed equally impossible to prevent it or to abolish it by convention. The only remaining alternative was to let the matter drop, and to leave the solution of the problem to time. Pitt's reproaches of the government on this account, and his introduction of this carefully avoided question into the business of the day, was the clumsy interference of an outsider with the delicate machinery of foreign policy, of which parliamentary speakers are often enough guilty in our own times. In view of Pitt's capacity for finding the weak places in an opponent's case, it was only to be expected that he should vigorously criticise the deficiencies of the financial compromise.

Upon the whole it may be said that the speech was excellently calculated to damage Walpole[1] and to discredit his government, that it chose the proper points of attack and pushed the assault cleverly home. It certainly did not repre-

[1] Those who were present refer particularly to the insulting acerbity of Pitt's speech as compared with the otherwise quiet character of the debate.—Coxe, *Walpole*, iii. 516 and 519.

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sent the true interests of the state. In point of statesmanship it was worse than worthless, it was dangerous. It contained not a single point of view or piece of advice that a responsible statesman could have used; on the contrary, the whole of the argument was intended to raise obstacles to the most desirable course of policy. Pitt's position among the opposition members was considerably strengthened by this speech, for the detriment of Walpole was the sole object of the opposition policy; he also gained a considerable reputation as an orator in the common sense of the word, that is, as deciding the opinion of the masses who are incapable of thinking for themselves. For the first time Pitt was held in higher esteem than his friend Lyttelton.[1] It cannot, however, be said that he had gained a victory over his opponents. Had all the members been free to vote as they pleased, no doubt Pitt would have gained a majority: we cannot discuss such a possibility, for in that case Walpole's government would have been impossible: a minister who came into power would have had to look elsewhere for support, and procedure would have been wholly different. Even as things were, Walpole was in wholly unusual danger of defeat, for he was making a desperate venture in behalf of the interests of the state which he fully appreciated. In defiance of[2] public opinion as aroused by the opposition, in defiance of the heir-apparent, of the king, who was inclined to war, and of the majority of his ministerial colleagues, he had clung to his peace policy, and had secured an acceptable compromise which he now laid before Parliament. In the face of all this opposition he had obtained a small majority; the address was adopted by 260 votes to 223, and his success was due to the justice of his cause, which the more far-sighted could not fail to acknowledge, and to the adroitness with which that cause had been represented. It was more than a victory of corruption, as the opposition naturally represented it: it was a victory of truth and of carefully argued oratory. Corruption was merely thrown into the balance as a counterpoise to means no less despicable, the arts of the demagogue. Pitt's arguments, if properly considered, would have invited defeat.

While opposing the strengthening of the army, the advantage of which to Walpole he feared, and attacking the

[1] Phillimore, i. 118.

[2] Ballantyne, *Carteret*, p. 209 f.

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ministers' Spanish policy, Pitt also devoted some attention in his speeches to the exposure of parliamentary corruption. He hinted at this practice unambiguously whenever opportunity offered, or censured it in plain terms. In his speech upon the reduction of the army he cleverly emphasised the fact that a remarkable unanimity appeared to persist among the defenders of the government's actions, a unanimity not to be explained by any connection with the positions which individuals occupied under the throne; for in that case, he concluded with a home-thrust, they did not deserve to be entrusted with the protection of the national freedom and dominions. He had the advantage of the obvious fact that the same unanimity did not prevail in his own party, for the very man against whom his speech was immediately directed, and who therefore supported the government on the army question, was Sir T. Saunderson, the treasurer of the Prince of Wales. In his speech upon the sailors' bill he made repeated references to corruption, and in his answer to Horace Walpole's reply accused him directly of the practice.

It may seem that Pitt's action deserved high praise, and that he should be regarded as the initiator of new and afterwards fruitful ideas. Many may even be inclined to ascribe to him those ideas of parliamentary reform which he certainly entertained at a later period. Of all this there can be no question here, and nothing of the kind is to be gathered from Pitt's utterances on the subject. In this, as in all cases, his objects were eminently practical and selfish. He supported everything that could help his plans, and opposed all that thwarted them; at a comparatively early date he had conceived the idea, though he had not elaborated it, that an excellent foundation of success might be laid by the strictest possible observance of political morality, and by the adoption of a certain lofty and disinterested attitude upon sordid questions of ways and means. In the case of parliamentary corruption these two motives became operative. So long as Walpole was in power, corruption was a direct obstacle to Pitt's advance: hence he attacked the practice. At the same time his action bore an appearance of high moral character, directed as it was against a public misdemeanour, and this was an additional motive for beginning the attack. Naturally he combated only the bribery of elected members, and not the influencing of cor-

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porations or the transformation of their opinions; in the latter case Pitt, who himself represented a rotten borough, would have been one of the first to lose his seat.

A general view of Pitt's action in these years leaves the impression that he was still strongly influenced by others, and that his intellectual outlook was somewhat restricted. The environment in which fate and his own inclination had placed him had driven him, in conjunction with his feelings of self-interest and his patriotic ideas, to take up the struggle with Walpole, whom he justly regarded as the most dangerous obstacle to his advancement. His political horizon was now entirely overshadowed by the one idea of securing this minister's downfall. He knew no other object, and this object determined his every patriotic, moral, and self-interested action. With all the fire, and with all the ruthlessness and recklessness of youth, he dashed into the fray. The statesman's capacity of holding a number of schemes and interests in connection, of not forgetting side issues while advancing in one direction, a capacity akin to that of the general, was as yet undeveloped in Pitt. He was the zealous subaltern entrusted with a certain task, who uses all available means to secure its accomplishment, careless of the damage that may be done to other concurrent interests. Intellectual power, dexterity, and energy he undoubtedly displayed, but the conceit of youth was also apparent. His inherent love of battle led him to regard cut and thrust as the main object, and he forgot that in the war of words conviction leads to victory. Many of his assertions he can hardly have believed himself, still less have made credible to others: they served only to delight his friends and to exasperate his enemies, contributing nothing to the elucidation or decision of the point at issue, and leading only to an oratorical or apparent success, not to victory. It may be said with truth that he was lacking in the finer feelings which a thorough education should develop. This was the consequence of an environment in which selfishness, revolt against paternal authority, and embittered family quarrels were predominant. In the royal family with which he was in connection, as in his own, these features were almost traditional. The more credit to him for the better traditions which he was afterwards able to create, thanks to the fundamental nobility of his character.

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The failure of the opposition attack upon the Spanish convention was followed by a kind of armistice in party warfare. Under Bolingbroke's advice the opposition abstained from further participation in parliamentary discussion, thus practically seceding from the state. Their reasons, as formulated by Sir William Wyndham, Bolingbroke's mouthpiece, were that they could no longer be present at the meetings of an assembly which was insensible to the most cogent arguments, and where the majority seemed to be actuated by secret motives. Their action was thus to be regarded as a demonstration against Walpole's system of corruption. However, instead of arousing the excitement and disturbance which they desired, the sole result was to enable the minister to introduce a number of reforms unopposed. Relieved of a wearisome burden, Walpole was now able to devote his entire energy to the welfare of the state. The secessionists immediately recognised the extent of their error, but were unable to repair it forthwith. Some ground of action had first to be discovered, and this was provided by the foreign policy of the country: a breach with Spain was at length effected, and was helped by the action of the opposition. With this event begins the final struggle with Walpole, which ended with his resignation. Our next task is to examine Pitt's share in the struggle.

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CHAPTER VII

WALPOLE'S DOWNFALL

Robert Walpole was the avowed supporter of a peace policy. His great work was the consolidation of the new dynasty and the furtherance of economic progress, and he did not wish to see this work disturbed by a war without object or prospect. In the teeth of the popular passion aroused by the opposition, he had succeeded in compromising the existing points of difference, and in securing at any rate a postponement of hostilities with Spain. Had the opposition to his policy proceeded only from his parliamentary adversaries and the fickle public opinion of the nation, Walpole, who had often defied these forces, would probably have succeeded in the attainment of his object: his diplomatic skill was great, and there was no insoluble problem before him, at any rate none which could not be postponed. The activity of the opposition was chiefly manifest in the press and in Parliament, where, however, Walpole's task was easiest, for the reason that the real centre of this activity was not Parliament but the throne, and in this quarter a curtailment of the minister's influence was more than possible. The king was opposed to Walpole's peace policy; he was anxious to gain military glory, and to display his powers of generalship when occasion offered, and he had no wish to expose himself to unpopularity by supporting the maintenance of peace. Queen Caroline, who might perhaps have induced him to continue in Walpole's path, was now dead, and he was therefore able to adopt a new policy unopposed. It was not his method to interfere in the administration, although the minister's foreign policy was sometimes contradicted, or openly to show favour to the opposition; he simply allowed his divergence of opinion to be known, and such was the prestige of the Crown that the mere announce-

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ment of his views brought about the change which Walpole had previously opposed. The Crown exerted its influence directly upon the minister's colleagues. These were all weak men, and had, indeed, been chosen for their weakness. They kept their eyes upon the king, and so long as Walpole's views coincided with his, they followed their leader, notwithstanding the tension already existing between them;[1] when once they became aware of a difference between Walpole and the king they proceeded to act against the minister. The Spanish affair required the most delicate and careful handling, if it was to be brought to a favourable, or in other words to a peaceful, conclusion. The Spaniards were irritated by the violent and immoderate language uttered in Parliament, and were inclined to believe that Walpole would find but inadequate support in the event of war by reason of his unpopularity. They made the mistake, which others have since made, of supposing that domestic dissension must necessarily hamper the military energies of England, and were thus more inclined to an appeal to arms than they would otherwise have been, in view of their own military deficiencies. Hence the correct policy was that which Walpole had hitherto followed, to adopt a conciliatory attitude, to avoid giving offence, and to make a show of military power. A single mistake and war was certain. This mistake and others also were then committed by the secretary of state, the Duke of Newcastle, who was responsible for the foreign correspondence. The character and importance of this personage will be considered hereafter: he was by no means inclined to war, and was indeed afraid of the dangerous entanglements thereby involved, but he was unusually skilful in joining the party which seemed likely to rise to power. His great wealth and extensive patronage made him welcome to any ministry, and thus he was able to survive all changes. His action now turned the scale; his despatches to Mr. Keene, the English ambassador in Madrid, were composed from the standpoint of the merchants who were incensed with Spain. Thus the execution of the convention, which Walpole had brought about with such trouble and in opposition to his colleagues, became impossible. Either country issued its demands in the form of an ultimatum, and war was declared on October 19, 1739.

[1] Bolingbroke to Wyndham, February 3, 1738.—Coxe, *Walpole*, iii. 507.

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Walpole thus found himself driven out of that foreign policy to which he had adhered at all costs, and English historians, interpreting the facts in the light of parliamentary ideas, naturally ask in astonishment why he remained in office, and why, like Pitt at a later date, he did not proudly declare his inability to bear the responsibility for measures that were not his own. It must, however, be remembered that the modern conception of a minister's position was not generally accepted at that date, even in England. The minister could not govern in direct opposition to Parliament, for the reason that Parliament was able to refuse supplies; he might also be dismissed by royal prerogative; but apart from these possibilities, he guided the state as circumstances permitted. He pursued that line of policy which he thought best, and if he met with insurmountable obstacles, he turned aside until he was able to resume his former progress. The idea that a minister should retain office only so long as he has a free hand to act is somewhat confused, if regarded from the right point of view. Entire liberty of action in foreign policy is impossible: a minister is obliged to accommodate his measures to those of foreign powers, and this may often necessitate the adoption of a new course.[1] If, upon such adoption, a minister may remain in office, why should he retire if a similar change of policy be imposed on him by the operation of legitimate forces within his own party? He is then responsible for a line of conduct, not for its results; obedience to the constitution cannot be made a ground of accusation. A minister's statesmanship is shown in his power of securing his object, or as much of it as possible, in the face of all obstacles, difficulties, and interference. In general, the modern theory of ministerial action is of this character. An inevitable change of policy may, with clever handling, be made to appear purely voluntary. To this must be added the fact that nothing, after all, had been done in direct opposition to Walpole's wishes. He had attempted to keep the peace, and after a temporary success his efforts had been frustrated by

[1] Thus Walpole very justly declared in the great speech in his defence, delivered on February 13, 1741: 'Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that I am prime and sole minister in this country, am I therefore prime and sole minister of all Europe? Am I answerable for the conduct of other countries, as well as for that of my own?'—Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 660.

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the attitude of Spain, that is, by a force out of his control. The secession of his colleagues was well known, but not officially known. Thus Walpole could assert the continuity of his policy without hesitation, though it was a policy which had brought war with Spain into the sum-total of its factors.

The minister, therefore, remained in office. He could not prevent the appeal to arms, but he also would not or could not take over the exclusive conduct of the war: 'It is your war, and I wish you joy of it,' he is reported to have said to the Duke of Newcastle.[1] In other respects he continued the work of his office as before. He had shown his compliance by a concession to the king, and he might now hope to maintain his position, for he still felt himself assured of the royal favour. His fall could only be secured at the cost of another assault, and his opponents busied themselves in seeking opportunity to deliver an attack.

The first step was to make the best possible use against the minister of the new situation created by the outbreak of war. Though this event was not an opposition triumph, but rather evidence of the decisive influence of the Crown, yet it could be represented as a victory for the opposition, which had always advocated war, and upon this object the leaders now concentrated their efforts.

The delight of the nation, and especially of the mercantile class, was great and heartfelt. Spain was generally regarded as weak and incapable of defence, and it was supposed that brilliant successes were at hand. The nation hoped not only to remove all grounds of dispute in a short time, but dreamed also of the rich plunder to be gained from the Spanish possessions, of the capture of the silver fleet as in former times, and even of the acquisition of the gold-producing districts of America. These expectations were expressed in the rise of English stocks. Few paused to consider the difficulties of operating in unknown waters on an enemy's coast, the thousand dangers to which fleets were exposed, and the secure foundation laid by Spanish rule in the course of two centuries of labour, by no means incompetent, beyond the seas. In comparison with the British, the Spaniards were still the old and experienced colonising nation, whose fundamental principles were appropriated and improved by smaller nations

[1] Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 638.

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following in their steps. Spain had indeed neglected her sea-power in most irresponsible fashion and had exposed herself to severe loss upon occasion: her economic prosperity was on the decline. But a general scheme for the plunder or overthrow of the Spanish supremacy was inconceivable. The facts were not appreciated in England, and hence the declaration of war evoked an enthusiasm in England which could only have been justified by a decisive victory. The opposition leaders took a large share in these rejoicings. The prince went so far as to join a procession to the City in celebration of the event, and drank to the favourable issue of the war. These proceedings were rather in the nature of a demonstration than the outcome of real feeling. Walpole's opponents desired to create the impression that they had actually obtained or extorted the real object of their efforts, and proved themselves the stronger party. They hoped that the resulting prestige would increase the number of their adherents, a possibility already explained by Chesterfield in the advice he gave upon the death of the queen.[1]

The immediate advantage to the opposition was the pretext which they could now employ for reversing the ill-advised measure of secession which had checked their activity for months past. At the meeting of Parliament after the outbreak of war, in November 1739, they reappeared in their places, and Wyndham undertook the task of explaining their action as due to the change in the situation and the fulfilment of their most urgent demands. This was, however, a bitter mouthful to swallow, for no assurance or rhetoric could hide the fact that they had made a tactical mistake, which they regretted and were now attempting to repair. With biting sarcasm Walpole greeted these prodigal sons, expressed his satisfaction at their repentance and return to duty, though the state, as he observed, would have suffered no great disadvantage from a longer absence on their part. In fact his opportunity of peaceful and productive work disappeared with the return of his opponents; his task was in no way facilitated by the want of oratorical talent prevailing in the government party: however, he was able to command a tolerably secure majority throughout the session. The conduct of the war need not have cost him any excessive anxiety in view of his

[1] To Lyttelton, November 12, 1737.—Phillimore, i. 87 f.

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dominant position. If the issue were successful, his enemies might take credit for the war which they had provoked, while in the event of failure they could throw the blame upon himself as the minister in power; but it was equally possible to defend the diametrically opposite view. Walpole could represent failure as the justification of his original policy, and success as due to his own perspicacity and forethought. Success would be more advantageous to himself as likely to decrease the national tendency to opposition, and to provide arguments for the maintenance of the existing government; but in the contrary event the actual composition of the House of Commons would give no ground for immediate apprehension. Popular dissatisfaction would not make itself felt decisively until the elections to be held in the year 1741. Unfortunately, events occurred shortly afterwards at the seat of war which threw discredit upon the government, though our present knowledge of the facts shows us that the opposition was solely to blame.

Utterly despicable and anything rather than patriotic was the behaviour of the so-called patriots; measures undertaken by the government for the security and advancement of the state were subjected in their execution and their results to carping criticism, and made so many opportunities for attack in season and out of season. In time of war the first and the most justifiable demand of the government is to be allowed full freedom of action and to be relieved of the duty of continually accounting for its actions. Interference based upon inadequate knowledge of the facts is evidence either of childish ignorance and presumption or of selfishness outweighing all sense of patriotism, whether it proceeds from an individual or from a party. The theory that such criticism is actuated by the object of replacing a notoriously incompetent leader by one able to surmount the difficulties of the situation, is an excuse valid only in rare cases, where the most damaging facts can be definitely proved, facts that would oblige the immediate resignation of the minister responsible under the English constitution of that age. Certainly nothing of the kind was forthcoming in Walpole's case. Every one, and the opposition speakers as well as any one, knew that Walpole, even if he went his own way and used illegal means to maintain his power, was a sensible ruler, and that the accusations

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brought against him were either obvious falsehoods or exaggerations. Hence the opposition fall under the stigma of endangering the state to secure their own aggrandisement and of materially increasing the difficulty of the situation.

It cannot be denied that Pitt must bear a large part of the responsibility for this action. Even after the outbreak of war he continued to attack the government with all his old recklessness, animated only by the desire to secure the downfall of his adversary. He made not the smallest overtures of conciliation: we cannot discover that he ever entertained the obvious idea of suspending hostilities until the moment of danger was past. His every action seems calculated to raise obstacles and to inspire aversion and distrust of the government. It must be remembered that the habit of placing party interest foremost was an universal and long-established custom, to which the members of the ruling classes adapted themselves almost without exception, and that Pitt was not conscious of the wrongfulness of his action. As I have already briefly explained, Pitt is not to be blamed for yielding to the pressure of his moral environment; the guilt must rest upon the social and constitutional conditions, and upon the current ideas, which made such practices possible. The constitution was plutocratic in character, and the upper classes were actuated by an unhealthy yearning for easily gained wealth and by an exaggerated esteem for worldly possessions. Pitt may perhaps have cared little for pecuniary gain; he was not without nobler ambitions; but the theory of life current among the plutocracy influenced him and determined his action.

Only three of Pitt's speeches during this session are known to us: they were not particularly successful, and after the elections he did not come forward until Walpole's resignation. Some oratorical improvement can be observed: he was now obviously at pains to get to the bottom of the point at issue, and to base his assertions upon some foundation of political or historical fact, though his methods were still highly superficial. We can see that his studies had progressed; but his knowledge was not a means for discovering truth or imparting justice, but a weapon for attacking his opponents. Points that would help his objects were all that he cared to seek and use.

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On January 24, 1740, a motion was brought forward in the House of Commons, calling upon the government to communicate to the House the instructions and orders given to Admiral Haddock.[1] Haddock was in command of the Mediterranean fleet, the movements of which in Spanish waters had aroused the suspicions of the Madrid Court and contributed to bring about the outbreak of war. The opposition were dissatisfied because Haddock had disappointed their hopes by abstaining from a descent upon the enemy's coasts, and wished to turn the circumstance to account against the ministry. It afterwards appeared that the menacing attitude of France and the weakness of his fleet had prevented the admiral from undertaking any extensive operations. Walpole had no general objection to the publication of the orders, but considered the motion inopportune as being calculated only to waste precious time with useless investigations. Pitt rose to denounce this opinion. 'It is my opinion,' he asserted, 'that our time cannot be more usefully employed during a war than in examining how it has been conducted and settling the degree of confidence that may be reposed in those to whose care are entrusted our reputations, our fortunes, and our lives. . . . We are now to examine whether it is probable that we shall preserve our commerce and our independence or whether we are sinking into subjection to foreign power.' Pitt thus attempted to induce Parliament to adopt an attitude which would nullify any reasonable conduct of foreign policy or of war, and would precipitate the dangers which it was especially important to avoid: he was ready to permit the introduction of a new and more capable leader, but at the same time to diminish the confidence reposed in him, and to grant Parliament a right of continual interference with the executive, though every thinking man must have known that undivided leadership is essential to success in war. But Pitt's interest was directed rather to damaging the reputation of the minister than to securing military success, and in the prosecution of this aim he supported a practice of interference obviously detrimental. He then proceeded to assert that the documents to be laid before the House should be selected not by the ministers but by Parliament, to avoid the possible suppression of material evidence. The attack led to no result, thanks to the minis-

[1] The debate and Pitt's speech in *Parliamentary History*, xi. 1001 ff.

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terial majority, but a new opportunity was soon afforded of placing obstacles in the way of the government.

England at that date maintained a fleet of extraordinary size, considered in relation to the numbers of her population; the provision of an adequate personnel was a standing difficulty, and one apparent in every war that was waged during that period. The numbers of trained seamen were far greater in proportion to the population than in other countries, and it might be thought that a sufficient supply of volunteers for naval warfare would have been forthcoming. But the severe privations and the rough treatment of the sailors were deterrents to volunteer service, and to supply the resulting deficiencies recourse was had to the violent methods of the press-gang. The recruits obtained by this means were very inferior in quality and quantity, and the deficiency was severely felt at the outset of the war, when great successes might have been secured by rapid naval action; in consequence Walpole desired to introduce a system of conscription analogous to that existing in France. He proposed to institute a periodical census of sailors, and on this basis to arrange an equitable system of conscription. During the debate upon this measure in March 1740 Pitt came forward on behalf of the opposition.[1]

It cannot be denied that Walpole's measure contained much that was severe and contradictory to the ideas of individual freedom inherent in the English nation. This fact was generally recognised, and Walpole had already modified his proposals in an attempt to satisfy popular feeling. At the same time it was a carefully elaborated and highly feasible measure, and as such was deserving of full discussion. Pitt might well have emphasised its defects and proposed their remedy, or have shown the necessity for the rejection of the measure as irremediable; he preferred, however, to act once again as the avowed enemy of the government. He delivered a bitter onslaught upon the author and the defenders of the measure, imputing motives of self-interest with continual personal references to the minister, depicting the cruelties of the bill in the most lurid colours with unbounded exaggeration. 'These tyrants of administration,' he thundered, 'who amuse themselves with oppressing their fellow-subjects,

[1] Thackeray, i. 34 ff.

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who add without reluctance one hardship to another, invade the liberty of those whom they have already overborne with taxes: first plunder and then imprison.' In this tone the speech continues with repetition of the words cruelty, oppression, madness, contempt, and other forcible terms which contribute nothing whatever to the elucidation of the point at issue. Mr. Winnington, as a friend of Walpole's, may not have been wholly unprejudiced, but was certainly not far wrong in saying that it was 'the prettiest words and the worst language he had ever heard.'[1] Wholly justified also was the answer of the aged Horace Walpole, Sir Robert's brother, an experienced diplomatist, fully acquainted with the intricacies of foreign policy, who laid stress upon the speaker's youth, and asserted that only his inexperience and the impetuosity natural to his years could excuse his behaviour. The justice of these reproaches may be seen from the fact that, far from showing any confusion, recognising his mistake, or changing his tone, Pitt derived material for further attacks and insults[2] from the exhortation of his opponent. Pitt considered that he showed his superiority to his opponents by this means, and did not remember that their dignity forbade them to descend to his level. Wholly apposite also was Horace's accusation of theatricalism; stage effects were the object of his speech both in content and in form, according to our knowledge of his style of oratory. The charge held good in spite of all his far-fetched arguments, which it is not worth our while to reproduce or to criticise. The acerbity of his attack upon Horace obliged the Speaker, Mr. Winnington, to call him to order. Pitt was in no way abashed by this rebuke; he used the severity of its terms as a ground for reproaching the Speaker for his immoderate language. None the less, he was praised and kissed before the whole House for his speech by the prince, who had been present during the debate.[3] The recruiting bill met with such violent opposition that it could

[1] Cp. Coxe, *Walpole*, iii. 609.

[2] A pleasing anecdote of the means by which Horace induced Pitt to change his tone on a similar occasion has been wrongly referred to this debate. As is convincingly proved in the *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 195, it belongs to the year 1745, and will be afterwards narrated. Green still assigns it to 1740 (p. 19).

[3] Coxe, *Walpole*, iii. 609.

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only be passed in a very modified form, in which its real value disappeared.

Disagreeable as was the behaviour of the opposition, it implied no immediate danger to Walpole. Neither the brilliancy nor the violence of the opposition speakers could have shaken his position, and many of their fiercest blows recoiled upon themselves. Far more detrimental to Walpole were events at the seat of war, whether successful or unsuccessful, and here again his embarrassments were due, not to the parliamentary opposition, but to his opponents within the cabinet. One of his declared enemies, who had often inveighed against his peace policy, and had been snubbed in consequence, was Admiral Vernon: at the outbreak of hostilities he had been sent by the authorities to the West Indies with a squadron of six ships, to capture the silver fleet. The prince seems to have procured him this command, for Lyttelton, in a letter to Pitt, speaks of the admiral as fighting under the prince's auspices.[1]

Vernon set out for the harbour town of Portobello, on the isthmus of Panama: here was held the yearly market, the goods for which were brought in by Spain upon the one side, and upon the other from the west coast of South America, across the isthmus. On those occasions the harbour was a busy spot, but at other times it was quiet enough, and of no great military importance, although fortified. The Spaniards had made no preparation to meet an attack, and the admiral secured possession of the town and fortress with little trouble. The opposition now proceeded to turn this event to their own advantage in every possible manner. In 1726 Admiral Hosier with twenty ships had not ventured to disobey his instructions by attacking the place: now six ships had sufficed to secure its surrender. It was thus abundantly clear that only Walpole was to blame for the fact that great successes had not been secured at an earlier date. Vernon was the hero of the hour. His exploit was celebrated in speeches and poems, such as

[1] G. Lyttelton to Pitt, from Hagley, May 23, 1741: '. . . I am glad . . . to congratulate H.R.H. upon the success of the two Admirals, who both fight under his auspices. May Vernon retrieve for him part of what Sir Robert Walpole has lost, the reputation and trade of England, and may H.R.H.'s own virtue recover the rest, its declining morals and liberties.'—Chatham MSS., Public Record Office.

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Richard Glover's ballad 'Hosier's Ghost'; these were invariably directed against Walpole. A weak attendance of members enabled the opposition to insert the words 'with only six ships' in the address of congratulation presented by the House of Commons: this addition was an implied censure of the previous failure. The worst feature of the affair was the suspicion of the government which the admiral, an obstinate and domineering character, was induced to entertain. Walpole was naturally irritated by these incessant exaggerations, and his attitude was misrepresented to Vernon, who imagined that his superiors grudged him his success, and were anxious to place obstacles in his way. A series of disasters now followed, partly in consequence of this lack of confidence. Admiral Anson sailed in September 1740 to pass through the straits of Magellan and ravage the west coast of America: he disappeared for three years, when he returned by way of Asia with only one ship, though with much valuable booty. Attempts to capture a Spanish fleet of merchantmen in Spanish waters failed utterly. Complete disaster ended the most important enterprise which was undertaken in the West Indies. A powerful fleet of one hundred and eleven ships, with fifteen thousand sailors and twelve thousand troops, was sent out to the help of Admiral Vernon in October 1740, in spite of Walpole's warnings against the denudation of the English coasts. Vernon commanded the ships and General Wentworth the troops. The whole force set out for the harbour town of Carthagena, in New Granada. After some initial success, Vernon's jealousy of Wentworth soon obliged the raising of the siege. Considerably reduced in strength, the fleet sailed against Santiago de Cuba, but here again was soon forced to retire.

Thus Vernon, Walpole's opponent, had succeeded in an enterprise outside of his instructions, with somewhat inadequate forces: on the other hand, operations ordered by the ministry, and conducted under the more restricted powers of command assigned to him, had ended in total failure. The causes of failure could not be immediately investigated, and would have been difficult in any case to establish: hence it was possible to complain in the strongest terms of the government in general and of Walpole in particular, although he had had very little connection with any part of the affair.

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This course of action was pursued to the uttermost in the next session of Parliament, and Pitt was energetically to the fore.

To this unsatisfactory situation was now added a change in continental politics, little in accordance with English interests. The death of Frederick William I. of Prussia was not regarded by the English government as a wholly undesirable event. The strong personal dislike existing between him and George II. had prevented that closer connection between their kingdoms which was thought desirable in London after the breach with Spain. Thus the advent of a new ruler appeared highly opportune. Negotiations with the young King Frederick were immediately begun with the object of forming an alliance against France. A military state like Prussia was exactly the ally needed by England. Prussian troops could protect Hanover, and prevent a French invasion of Holland, thus liberating the naval forces of that state for the help of England; under special circumstances Prussians could be brought into the country to protect the English coasts. Germany was at that time regarded by England as the great soldier-market of the world, a theory to which Pitt also gave expression on occasion.[1] No better assortment of these wares existed than in the Prussia of Frederick William I. He seemed to have been working expressly for England's benefit, and yet had been so blind as to grant her no share of his treasures. This mistake his successor was now to repair. However, Frederick II. proved a bitter disappointment. He demanded not only money, but also important services, in return for his help, and on the death of the Emperor Charles VI. in October 1740 he began an independent course of policy entirely opposed to British interests. His attack upon Silesia ruined the whole of that combination which England had been building up for half a century in view of a possible war with France. This important point requires more detailed treatment, for only by a clear understanding of these conditions is it possible to form a correct judgment of Pitt's speeches and of his later continental policy.

I have already explained in the Introduction how England had long since been induced to regard Austria as her natural ally, for the reason that French and Austrian interests con-

[1] Mahon, *History*, iii. 167.

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flicted on land as French and English interests conflicted by sea. Under Walpole's government this bond had been relaxed: concerned only for the maintenance of peace, he had refused the emperor the support he required in his hour of need, and had forced him to arrive at an understanding with France. The result of the Polish War of Succession in conjunction with the peace of Vienna which followed might be regarded as a temporary dissolution of the old Austro-English connection, though it was not to be expected that France would be supported by Austria against England. Prussia might now have taken the place of this last ally, for she had already participated in the wars against France, and England would thus have been secured against any fresh ambitions entertained by Austria. This was the view which Frederick II. was expected to take. No course of policy could have been more distasteful to England than that which he chose. On the death of the emperor he raised claims upon Austria, which could only be conceded at the price of a complete breach between the two German powers. Both states, one or other of which England desired to use according to circumstances, were fully occupied with one another, and were unlikely, for a long time to come, to be factors in the combination which England wished to arrange. Hence the efforts of London diplomacy would be inevitably concentrated upon the task of repairing this unfortunate breach, and of restoring friendship as well as peace between Prussia and Austria. It was easy for Walpole's opponents to reproach the minister, and ascribe what had happened to his errors of policy, and on this side also the minister was exposed in consequence to further acrimonious attacks.

Meanwhile several important changes had taken place in the ranks of the opposition. Their motley forces had been chiefly kept together by William Wyndham, the representative of Bolingbroke's ideas, who held before them their common interests and their common objects: he had been very ill, had gone to visit his political mentor in France, and had there died. His loss was severely felt, though its consequences were perhaps exaggerated, for the disruptive tendencies, which now became strongly marked, could not in any case have been much longer suppressed. As the moment approached for a change of ministry, the projects of the opposition naturally

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became more definite, and the divergency of these was the natural outcome of the divergent nature of the component groups. In any case the party lost a capable debater in Wyndham. Another leading figure passed from their ranks: Lord Polwarth, who was one of the boy patriots' party and a prominent speaker, inherited the Scottish earldom of Marchmont. He consequently lost his seat in the House of Commons, while he was unable to enter the House of Lords, as he was not an English peer. Thus by a constitutional anomaly the attainment of a higher social position put an end to his political career. Both of these changes were of importance to Pitt, as they implied a higher appreciation of his personality and of his oratorical powers by the opposition. Thus he advanced in estimation, and began to claim a leading position. In the great struggle which followed he played a highly important part.

After a proposed amendment to the address in November 1740, whereon Pitt delivered a fiery speech,[1] this struggle began in February 1741, in the form of a general vote of censure upon Walpole, on the basis of which the king was to be asked to dismiss his prime minister. A certain Mr. Sandys, who was well known as constantly introducing motions, undertook the task on this occasion. He informed Walpole of his intentions some days beforehand, and thus secured the attendance of the minister and the general interest of the House. On February 13, 1741, he began the campaign with a great speech before a full House.[2] He showed much adroitness in bringing up every matter with which the minister could justly or unjustly be reproached. Much of his speech consisted of vague assertions, only to be maintained by prejudiced partisans. As regards foreign affairs, he emphasised England's isolation in the war which had broken out, and ascribed it to the fact that, instead of supporting Austria against France at the proper time, England had permitted the spoliation of her old ally. Austria had thus been alienated, while no concessions were to be expected from France. As to domestic policy, a serious burden was the steady increase of the national debt, which was not diminished by the creation of a sinking fund. This increase was due to the excessive size of the standing army—seventeen

[1] Coxe, *Walpole*, iii. 557.
[2] The debates in *Parliamentary History*, xi. 1303 ff.

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thousand men, as we know—and to the constant equipment of naval squadrons which never justified their existence by action. Abundant material for censure was afforded by the system of parliamentary corruption fostered by absolutist legislation, the creation of new sinecures, and other devices of the kind. In conclusion, severe criticisms were passed upon the conduct of the war, with special reference to the inadequate support given to the admirals, and in particular to the great Vernon. The many difficulties which beset the military authorities at the outset of the war were naturally passed over. After emphasising the unconstitutional nature of the despotism exercised by Walpole, the speaker drew the general conclusion that the man responsible for the misfortunes of the state should be deprived of his office. With the speech was associated the opposition proposal, that Walpole, as the subject of the vote of censure, should be excluded from further participation in the executive; but the manifest injustice of this proposal led to its immediate rejection. The debate was then continued upon the amendment to the address moved by Sandys, and at this point Pitt, after others had spoken, rose to deliver a great speech.

Every material point had already been raised, and little could now be added by way of censure; yet some new and important light must be thrown upon the question by the speech, if it was to have any real value. These requirements were satisfied by Pitt's speech, as we shall see. To begin with, he attempted to pave the way for the desertion of Walpole's following to his own side, and for this purpose he proceeded to demonstrate that no member could be reproached if he now condemned certain measures which he had formerly approved. With great dexterity he explained to the members he hoped to win over, that after all they could only have based their judgments upon such information as the ministry chose to provide, that they could not be held responsible for the inaccuracy of that information, and that they therefore had every right to change their opinions, now that they knew the truth. 'Hence I am inclined to hope,' he concluded this part of his argument, 'that as I shall be ready to declare my approbation of integrity and wisdom, though they should be found where I have long suspected ignorance and corruption; so others will, with equal justice, censure wickedness and error,

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though they should have been detected in that person whom they have long been taught to reverence as the oracle of knowledge and the pattern of virtue.' Pitt thus offers a compromise to Walpole's former adherents. He will henceforward regard them as men of honour, though he had previously considered them corrupted by bribes, while they are to leave in disgrace the patron whom they had formerly respected and supported. But the golden bridge which he was constructing for the retreat of his adversaries was not as yet complete. He must provide them with some tangible proof of the reality of those truths, the acceptance of which was to occasion their change of front. The essential soundness of such proof was not a matter of great consequence. He therefore put forward the bold and speciously coloured assertion that the success of political measures should be the guiding principle in judging them. 'If time,' he argued, 'has produced no vindication of those measures which were suspected of imprudence or of treachery, it must be at length acknowledged that those suspicions were just, and that what ought then to have been rejected ought now to be punished.' Truly, an unusual method of establishing culpability! A method by which any statesman who is merely unfortunate, and happens to be confronted by a hostile clique, can be convicted of the gravest misdemeanour. Whether his misfortune is his own fault or due to secret machinations within his party are questions not deemed worthy of investigation. On this occasion Pitt made a more detailed attempt than usual to found his assertions upon actual fact, and upon the events which had resulted in the present situation. Hence it is clear that he had been studying modern history to some purpose, though his explanations cannot be regarded as cogent proof. His strongest arguments were directed against the convention of Hanover of September 3, 1725, under which Walpole opposed the alliance of Spain with the emperor by an Anglo-French and Prussian federation, from which, however, Prussia speedily retired. Pitt stigmatised this federation as involving a servile dependence upon France. He particularly denounced the weakness of the motives which determined the conclusion of the agreement, especially the fear of the Pretender and of the support which might be afforded him by the enemy. Charles VI. afterwards gave a solemn assurance that he had entertained

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no intentions of the kind, so that Pitt may have been correct in asserting that the convention arose from a cowardly apprehension discreetly inspired by France. The orator certainly saw clearly that the government could not justify their attitude by the emperor's subsequent declarations, which were but incidental utterances proving little in any case; thus he was brought to speak in general of the impossibility of a rebellion, which must have been as obvious to the government as to the opposition which steadily asserted the fact. It now remained for him to show in what respects the convention had been especially advantageous to France and detrimental to England, and a bold stroke brought him out of this difficulty. 'An answer to that question,' he scornfully asserted, 'may very justly be refused, till the minister or his apologists shall explain his conduct in the last war with Spain.' Then followed a series of bitter attacks upon the diplomatic and military policy of 1726, which offered indeed many weak points for assault, though a correct judgment upon them could only be based upon a thorough examination of the unusually intricate circumstances of the case. Pitt deduced from them a series of the most extravagant accusations of Walpole: he had combined with foreign powers to the detriment of his country, had favoured her enemies and brought dishonour upon the English arms: all these denunciations must have seemed mere madness. The orator concluded by asserting that the minister deserved deprivation, not only of his position, but also of his life, and that it was an act of singular moderation to join the nation in demanding nothing more than his removal from office.

A consideration of the speech as a whole will show what new points Pitt was able to add to the arguments of previous speakers. The latter had founded their indictment only upon the most recent events, upon which Parliament had not as yet declared any opinion, and which were therefore open to individual judgment. Earlier events were now past and concluded: both Houses had repeatedly declared their agreement and concurrence with what had been done, and unless the verdict of the majority was to be disavowed, the past was a matter of purely antiquarian interest. However, it was these earlier measures of Walpole which Pitt attempted to use as a new ground of attack. For this purpose he proceeded to

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explain with great oratorical adroitness that the perversity of the earlier policy had only been made clear by recent developments, and that it was consequently justifiable to judge the one policy by the other; that it might now be used as a ground of censure, inasmuch as the former assent of the House had been granted in consequence of false information, and that there was therefore no real inconsistency in a reversal of judgment. The area of attack upon Walpole was thus considerably extended, and though the reasons of extension were unsound, yet Pitt had upon this occasion shown a sounder knowledge of facts and a superior power of insight. The speech marks an advance in rhetorical power, if not in statesmanship.

However, the enterprise ended in failure, and met with the disapproval of even some of the opposition groups. Many of the more far-sighted Tories objected to these inquisitorial methods, which might prove disastrous as well to the competent as to the incompetent official, in view of the fallibility of human nature. Lord Cornbury, whom we know to have been intimate with Pitt, gave full expression to this point of view, and laid his finger upon the weak spot of the proposal. The Jacobites adopted an attitude of neutrality towards Walpole, either because the minister was in communication with the Pretender, which fact inspired them to false hopes, or as the result of an arrangement between their leader, Shippen, and the minister. Walpole had formerly done him a service at the price of his neutrality in the event of a personal attack upon himself. At any rate, before the division took place, the Jacobites gave the House the impression that they did not care which of the Whig groups might be in power. The failure was completed by the brilliant defence offered by Walpole himself, who exposed with moderation and directness the utter futility of every charge brought against him. His proofs, founded as they were upon a sound knowledge of facts and deeds, crushed many assaults, and especially the selfish attacks of the king, while they proved impregnable to the vague, unfounded, and often embittered attacks of his opponents. The deep impression made by the speech was reflected in the voting. The rejection of the proposal by 290 to 106 votes was something more than a mere triumph for the powers of corruption. The House of Lords also decided in the

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minister's favour by 108 to 59 votes, and truth thus again defeated selfishness and party passion.

Failure in the orderly course of parliamentary debate might, however, become success, when the decision lay with the people, who were easily excited and deceived and lay open to the operation of intrigue and incitement. The approaching general election of 1741 afforded an opportunity for cutting the ground from under Walpole's feet, and for utilising to the utmost all the arguments which had proved futile in Parliament itself. Parliament was dissolved on April 29, 1741, and the election was fixed for June 25. A vigorous agitation was begun upon every side. The Pretender circulated letters urging on the struggle against Walpole, by whom he considered himself deceived; the Whig leaders of the opposition exerted their utmost powers to secure votes, and Prince Frederick used all his influence and all the money he could raise to gain seats for the opposition. The prince was stimulated by other motives than the mere desire for Walpole's downfall. This was the first election in which he had taken part in England, and he regarded it as a trial which was to prove the reality of his influence and position, and also to strengthen that position. What use he might make of power thus acquired remained an open question: he now availed himself of the general hostility to Walpole to secure the election of his own candidates. His efforts were greatly facilitated by his position as Duke of Cornwall, and in this quarter he received valuable help from Thomas Pitt of Boconnock.[1] He expended large sums in every quarter to help his cause, and burdened himself with a heavy load of debt in consequence. William Pitt visited the prince at Clifden during that summer, and through his favour and his brother's support was again returned for Old Sarum.[2]

Yet these efforts, great as they were, did not decide the struggle. Had the governmental party remained united, they could even then have retained their preponderance. Walpole failed for lack of support from the king and from his own colleagues. George II. went off to Hanover: without consulting his prime minister he secured the neutrality of his

[1] Mahon, *History*, iii. 94.

[2] In the Chatham MSS. is a letter from Lord Gower to Pitt, in Clifden, under date August 17, 1741.

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electorate in the war of the Austrian Succession, which was then beginning, and left things in England to take their course. The other members of the government began to imagine that Walpole's downfall might prove advantageous to themselves, as they would possibly secure greater power in the coming ministry. They knew that the king would summon only the moderate Whig members of the opposition, and would make no radical changes. Hence they showed a lack of energy in combating the efforts of the opposition, with the result that a Parliament was returned which did not contain a sufficient majority for the prime minister. If he was to retain office some new combination must be formed, and attempts in this direction were begun forthwith.

During the first session, which began in December 1741, the weakness of Walpole's position became immediately apparent, and was increased by the ill-health of the minister, who was no longer able to act with his former vigour. A lukewarm address, making no reference to the war, was voted in reply to the speech from the throne, and Walpole suffered several defeats in the scrutiny of disputed elections. There was a prospect that the motion for increasing the prince's appanage might be reintroduced. Once more he succeeded in inducing the king to try and save the situation. With the royal assent a proposal was sent to the prince guaranteeing the addition of £50,000 a year to his allowance, and undertaking the payment of his debts, if he would hold aloof from the opposition in future.[1] Walpole was aware of the lack of unity among his opponents: he prudently addressed himself to that section which was bound to meet with scanty recompense under the new system, hoping to maintain his ground by their neutrality. However, Prince Frederick declined to entertain any proposals of this nature so long as Walpole remained in office. The motives actuating this refusal have not been transmitted to us: probably the prince did not wish to see his political career cut short as the price of this subsidy. We learn from a first-hand source of information[2] of a somewhat mysterious occurrence which took

[1] Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 692 ff.

[2] Richard Glover, *Memoirs of a Celebrated Character*, p. 3. London, 1813. The author is the previously mentioned poet who wrote *Leonidas* and *Hosier's Ghost*, works which secured him much reputation among the leaders of the opposition and at the prince's court.

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place at this time. The prince's associates, in particular Lyttelton, Pitt, and the Grenvilles, are said to have approached the minister through a third party, and to have offered guarantees for the consent of the prince, but to have met with a contemptuous refusal. He declined to be helped by those who had hitherto persecuted him so fiercely or to share the power with them. Our informant gives this story as derived from the account of the prince himself, and of Dr. Ayscough, who had married Lyttelton's sister: in my opinion the story, so far as Pitt's share in it is concerned, is little worthy of credence; it is, at any rate, confirmed by no other evidence.

After much hesitation Walpole's resignation took effect on February 11, 1742: the House had adjourned for a few days, and Walpole had been created Lord Orford. This was the end of the plutocratic despotism: notwithstanding its many defects, it had conferred one inestimable advantage: the state had been guided by the firm policy of one outstanding character through a critical period, while the government had been strong enough to avoid bypaths and side issues. The loud complaints raised against this government were unjustifiable, and due only to the animosity of opponents, politically capable, who found themselves forced to submit to an autocracy which circumstances had made inevitable. Of these the most prominent was Pitt. At a later date he openly admitted his mistake, when he purposed himself to pursue a similar course of action. Walpole's fall was ultimately due not to these attacks, but to the fact that he had fulfilled his task. A new era was beginning with the year 1740, and new men were required. A minister whose inclinations tended solely to cast oil on troubled waters, and whose bodily strength was failing, was not the man to deal with the complexities of war. The period of Carteret followed that of Walpole, and this again, when the storm waves threatened to engulf the state, was succeeded by the period of William Pitt.

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CHAPTER VIII

UNREALISED EXPECTATIONS

Pitt's work up to the present moment may be described in one word as contributory; not in the general sense in which the term may be used of all human effort in so far as it contributes to the attainment of some object, but in the narrower sense of subserving purposes wholly self-interested. Pitt had striven to advance not by means of useful work, but by the favour of connections, and had therefore been forced to enter the ranks of that body which was attacking the government under the leadership of the heir to the throne. If he was not to lose all prospect of attaining his desires, he was obliged to adapt his political attitude to the desires of other people, though he was able to make his voice heard upon individual points, and to secure a certain influence by means of his oratorical abilities. This position undoubtedly seemed to him in no way burdensome. Youth accommodates itself easily to any given environment, adopts the ideas of others and propounds them as original, as its education and experience is inadequate to permit the adoption of an independent line of action. To walk in leading-strings is natural and necessary to youth, which only realises its dependency when the leader attempts a course of progress in contradiction to the ideas which youth has appropriated and developed. The relationship then becomes personal subservience or servitude. The influence of home and university education had already prepared Pitt to accept Bolingbroke's ideas, which were then paramount in his environment. He had joined the prince in hopes of a brilliant future, to be gained through his support, and also for patriotic motives, regarding the prince as the future 'patriot king.' He had then supported the attacks upon Walpole conformably with the instructions of the party

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leaders, and while striving to gain reward in their service he had also striven to benefit the state by his attempts to secure the removal of the man whose government formed the strongest obstacle to the execution of Bolingbroke's plans. We have already observed the possibility of some tension in his relations with the prince, who was by no means violently enamoured of the principles which he professed to represent. What was of cardinal importance to Pitt was to him nothing more than the means to a certain end.

With Walpole's fall Pitt seemed to have attained his great end and object. The event which he had declared necessary in so many speeches had become accomplished fact, and his energy had certainly contributed to this result. The immaturity of his oratorical powers may have diminished his possible influence in Parliament, but his violent language and the acerbity of his accusations found an echo in many quarters throughout the nation, and largely determined the result of the elections. However, it was no more than justice if Pitt and his associates lost the fruits of their triumph. Their policy was not one with any prospect of realisation under existing conditions; they had been pursuing the Utopian ideas of Bolingbroke, who was out of sympathy with his own country. They might have recognised the power of the monarchy, have adapted their policy to the king's desires, and thus have secured the opportunity of doing good service to the state: instead of this they attempted to impose a system upon the king which was utterly beyond the range of his political vision. A vigorous attack upon the minister gained the full sympathy of all who wished to enter into Walpole's inheritance, for his overthrow could only be secured by such action; but they were entirely ready to permit others to undertake this thankless task, which was bound to incur the king's displeasure. Pitt and his friends had thus made themselves the tools of cleverer men, and it was no matter for surprise if, having served their turn and made themselves obnoxious to the king, they were now laid aside. We shall afterwards (chapter x.) consider what were the motives which determined Chesterfield and Pitt, who were closely united during this and the following period, to adopt an attitude apparently so irrational.

It was an extraordinary fact, and little in accordance with

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the parliamentary maxims usually attributed to that age, that the man against whom the whole movement had been directed, and who now appeared crushed and beaten, should yet have exerted a dominant influence under the new arrangement of affairs. Walpole became the king's chosen adviser. The king was well aware that, though Walpole's views upon foreign policy might not coincide with his own, he had the welfare of the state and the interests of the monarchy at heart; that while resigning an untenable position to make room for new methods, he would and could maintain that system of government which the monarch deemed most desirable. Thus the new order of things was established before Walpole's retirement took place, and immediately upon his dismissal the great and greedy masses of the opposition were confronted with this accomplished fact.

This transaction established the principle that upon a change of government the formation of an entirely new ministry was by no means a necessity: to the remnants of the old ministry so many new elements might be added as were necessary to secure the king's consent and a majority in Parliament. Far from becoming the 'broad-bottom' ministry, as the opposition designated it, the cabinet was to be reconstructed upon a new but no less restricted basis. The combination of all parties in accordance with Bolingbroke's ideas was rather apparent than real; the preponderance was to remain as before in the hands of the Whigs. The Duke of Newcastle and his brother, Henry Pelham, remained as permanent elements; they had shown some readiness to support the king's military policy, and had come into collision with Walpole in consequence. Associated with them was Lord Hardwicke, the lord chancellor. Of the opposition William Pulteney and Lord Carteret were the first to be considered. The former had been a leading figure in the struggle with Walpole, but was not on that account to be esteemed a personal enemy: his prominent position and his wide influence made it impossible to pass him over. The latter had taken but a small share in the parliamentary conflict; he had a wide experience in the intricacies of foreign politics, and was inclined to support the king's policy. George II. was particularly anxious to secure his help. Pulteney was not desirous of any special office: he was

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ambitious for a seat in the cabinet and a peerage. Carteret wished to be secretary of state, and to have the exclusive direction of foreign affairs. Hence an unimportant character, Lord Wilmington, became first lord of the treasury, a position regarded as equivalent to that of prime minister. Pulteney was eventually the dupe. A show was made of leaving everything to him, and he began to consider himself the real holder of power: then he was gradually forced to accept the preconcerted arrangements. His business was to overcome all opposition to the new combination, and to calm men's minds: when this had been done he was laid aside.

Walpole's most effective means of defence had always been the disruption of the opposition party. He found no difficulty in making great use of this weapon in the formation of the present cabinet. The opposition outcry for a broad-bottomed cabinet had been raised with the sole object of securing the largest possible number of opponents to Walpole. When the distribution of offices took place, every one who had secured a post was anxious to restrict the ministerial basis by the exclusion of other factions. The selfish and materialist tone prevalent in political circles saw nothing outrageous in throwing good friends overboard if they seemed likely to impede progress. Hence one of the first steps taken by Walpole towards the regulation of affairs was an attempt to win over the prince to his side. We have seen that previous to the minister's resignation the prince declined to listen to any proposals of the kind. As soon as Walpole had resolved upon retirement he determined to make fresh overtures to the prince in the hope of removing any possible obstacle in that direction. On this occasion the attempt was successful. Prince Frederick secured the desired increase of his appanage and some concessions in personal matters. In return he promised to support the new government, and went so far as to grant Walpole, now Lord Orford, an audience on February 6, in which he assured the minister of his protection in the event of any personal attacks. We may feel surprised that the prince should now express himself satisfied with concessions but little more extensive than those which Walpole had already offered during his ministry. It must be remembered, however, that the prince had now attained his object:

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he believed he had set up a government wholly subservient to himself, and that his influence on the administration was now secure. He regarded Walpole's offer as an attempt to provide him with funds for the expenses of his political work, and as an acknowledgment of victory, seeing that he pledged himself merely to support his own interests in undertaking to support the cabinet which his co-operation had formed. Some sacrifice, however, was necessitated by this change of front, and the readiness with which this sacrifice was made does not display the prince's character in a very favourable light. His immediate adherents, the majority of the boy patriots, including Pitt, Lyttelton, and the Grenvilles, were passed over in the distribution of offices. His knowledge of his father's inclinations cannot have enabled him to calculate upon this neglect: two of his friends, Lord Baltimore and Archibald Hamilton—Mrs. Hamilton was reputed to be his mistress[1]—had already been given posts, and he refers to the fact as an unexpected favour. To subject himself to further disadvantages and to exclude himself from a share in the government for the sake of his youthful associates may very well have seemed inconvenient. Pitt, especially, was disappointed in him. He had believed that the prince and himself were united by common interests, and he had calculated upon the prince's gratitude: in reality he had been nothing more than his tool, to be laid aside when he had served his purpose. Under these circumstances it would have been reasonable for Pitt to resign his position in the prince's household; but his financial situation prevented the adoption of this course, the more so as he would have thrown away any future possibility of securing the prince's support for promotion to office.

Thus the king under Walpole's advice had won over to his cause the prince and Pulteney, the two leaders of the opposition, and had accordingly formed a new government: he might now calmly await the onslaught of the masses greedy for plunder. On February 11 a general meeting of the opposition politicians took place in the Fountain Tavern. Pulteney was present. The general dissatisfaction was expressed in heated language, and though Pulteney did his best to prove that everything had gone as they desired, and

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. Frederick, Prince of Wales.

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that every party had received its due share, the majority declined to be convinced, and the meeting broke up without result. The prince then intervened. A deliberation was held in his presence by a smaller body, and here the two leaders attained their object. After a number of posts had been bestowed by the opposition party, it became clear that in view of the difficulties of the situation nothing more was to be had, and the malcontents resolved to appear together at court on February 18 in token of their satisfaction. The prince also waited upon his father for the first time upon that day, and met with a gracious reception. The reconciliation of the parties and of the royal family appeared to be complete, and a newspaper, the *Defence of the People*, congratulated the monarch as being now the ruler of a whole and undivided nation. The new government had now no difficulty upon the meeting of Parliament in securing a vote for the large supplies that were needed.

This harmony, however, was not of long duration. Pulteney was unable to fulfil all the promises which he had made in order to secure the compromise, and the result was fresh dissatisfaction. The Tory leader, the Duke of Argyle, an unstable character, resigned the office he had accepted; Lord Cobham, who had regained the command of his old regiment, the Royal Dragoons, and had also been granted a seat in the cabinet and the title of field-marshal, expressed his dissatisfaction; the prince soon recognised the real extent of his influence, and while he did not openly renew the quarrel, withdrew his support from the government, and allowed his court officials, Pitt and Lyttelton, to oppose the government measures. Thus an opposition party arose remarkable for the fact that it was not formally distinguishable from the government, and that it included part of the cabinet. Here it was obvious that Orford's ideas and influence were again predominant. By sacrificing his position he had strengthened his influence, and his object now was to manœuvre the enemy out of the breach through which they had penetrated, and then to restore the old established system in its entirety, except for some few individual changes. It was necessary to deal at once with a vigorous attack which exposed the critical nature of the situation. On March 9, 1742, Lord Limerick brought forward a proposal in the

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House of Commons for an examination of Walpole's conduct in office during the last twenty years.

The blow was not unexpected. It was probable that the opposition would attempt to show their power at this juncture; their wishes had, in general, been inadequately fulfilled, their different factions could unite upon this question, and they felt that they could count upon the support of the nation. Orford, too, was in considerable danger: he was conscious that he had done his best to further the interests of the state, and that he deserved none of the extravagant accusations brought against him by such speakers as Pitt: at the same time many of the actions by which he had maintained his position or carried out his measures might be considered highly questionable by rigid or prejudiced judges. His system, too, had been founded solely on a basis of corruption. Hence he had used the decisive influence which he had exerted upon the formation of the new administration with the object of obviating any attempt at impeachment or the execution of such an attempt. We have already seen that for this purpose he had secured the support of the prince, who had never been a personal enemy: similarly he had in many cases made a seat in the new cabinet conditional upon a promise not to support any proposed impeachment. Upon Pulteney alone such a condition could not be imposed; his leading position would prevent the fulfilment of any such promise on his part, and it was impossible to exclude him from the cabinet. For the rest Orford was obliged to rely upon the energy of trusty friends, and in particular upon the royal influence and prerogative, which might reasonably be expected to outweigh the animosity of popularity-seeking enemies. Among these latter Pitt was now prominent.

Recent events had brought about a fundamental change in Pitt's position. He had been, so to speak, uprooted from the ground in which he had grown to importance. His position had been given him by the favour of the prince and of the opposition leaders, and he owed his prestige therein to his oratorical gifts and to his zeal for study. Now his patrons were for all practical purposes members of the government, while the doors of the cabinet remained closed to him. He was suddenly left to stand alone, and for the moment he did not know upon whom he should rely, which cause he should

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combat or which he should espouse. Of his seat in Parliament he was secure for a term of years, but he had now to make himself a name at a moment when he could not longer fight under the ægis of the prince's prestige. He must prove his value independently, or he would fall into oblivion and lose all prospect of advancement. What prospect could be more welcome to him in this situation than the opportunity of attacking Orford? Here was a great object for which he could strive in conjunction with numerous friends and with better hope of success. He had an opportunity of achieving upon familiar ground a further series of brilliant exploits, which would force statesmen to recognise him as a dangerous foe, and the nation to regard him as an enthusiastic patriot. Whatever the cause at issue, whether just or unjust, he was bound to attack, but upon this occasion he seems to have considered his action fully justified. The prince, who was doubtful of the general result, placed no obstacles in his way, and thus he entered the new struggle with full determination.

Lord Limerick's proposal was for 'the appointment of a committee to inquire into the conduct of our domestic and foreign affairs for the last twenty years.'[1] It was not precisely a government motion, for the new administration adopted an attitude of comparative indifference; as the government offered no opposition, it was expected that the motion would be carried without difficulty. It was, indeed, the inevitable outcome of the whole of the movement which had led to Orford's downfall, and of all the violent condemnatory speeches which had been delivered in its course. There was, indeed, one personality whose absence from the debate was remarkable, William Pulteney, the leader of the former opposition and the presumptive head of the present cabinet; but the illness and the death of his daughter excused him entirely. It was known that he would be absent, but so little was a defeat apprehended that it seemed unnecessary to put off the matter on his account.

On this occasion Pitt came forward, if as the last, yet also as the chief, orator. After Limerick had proposed his motion, after Henry Pelham had opposed it, and when other speakers had finished, Pitt began a long speech. It was directed against

[1] For the debate, see *Parliamentary History*, xii. 447 ff.

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[1] *Parliamentary History*, xii. 447 ff.

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Pelham's assertions, who had announced that such an investigation was inopportune, as in view of the serious position of the state there was more important business at hand than the delivery of flowery speeches upon matters of ancient history. Seizing upon this expression Pitt first explained that the accessory, which were hardly distinguishable from the material elements of oratory, were valuable as proving a speaker's honesty and enthusiasm. He then drew a distinction between a motion for investigation and a direct impeachment; for the former it was not necessary that demonstrable culpability should exist; it was enough if suspicion of mismanagement were forthcoming. This assertion he based upon a reference to precedent: a thrust at Walpole was his preference for the undoubtedly defective peace of Utrecht as more practically valuable than the later conventions, namely, those concluded by Walpole. He observed that the investigation was demanded by the voice of the people, though their cries rarely reached the ears of the government, whose attention was usually occupied by office-holders or office-seekers. This voice was not heard as it used to be in the House of Commons, an assertion which became the text for one of his usual outbursts against the prevalent practice of corruption. After thus attempting to prove the justice of the demand and the necessity for an investigation, he proceeded to disabuse the opposition of the fear which they had expressed that state secrets might be betrayed to foreigners in the course of the inquiry. He was certainly correct in his statement that such mischief might easily be avoided by the employment of suitable precautions, and some of these he enumerated. His opponent had asserted that the immediate dangers should be overcome, and the war brought to an end, before any inquiry was started. This was an admirable opportunity for Pitt to turn his acrimony upon Orford. 'According to this way of arguing,' he thundered, 'a minister who has plundered and betrayed his country, and fears being called to an account in Parliament, has nothing to do but to involve his country in a dangerous war, or some other great distress, in order to prevent an inquiry into his conduct; because he may be dead before that war is at an end, or that distress is surmounted. Thus, like the most detestable of all thieves, after plundering the house, he has but to set it on fire, that he may escape in the confusion.' Common and foolish as the

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simile may appear, it is obvious that he actually did accuse the minister of such action: he had indeed often expressed himself in similar terms upon other occasions. Now came the central point of the speech, which explained his own attitude. He rejected the supposition that an investigation of the past was of no value for the present, as if it were conducted merely for revenge, and strongly emphasised the fact that though the minister had been overthrown, his power had not come to an end, and that they could never be rid of him without some such measure as that before the House. 'If we do not inquire,' he said, 'we shall probably remain under his guidance; because, though he be removed from the treasury board, he is not removed from the king's court, nor will he, probably, unless it be by our advice, or unless we lodge him in a place at the other end of the town,[1] where he cannot so well injure his country.' Pitt had obviously realised the situation, and the power still exercised by the dismissed minister, against which he regarded the whole proceeding as directed. His statement of this fact gave an increased importance to the motion, and Pitt himself appeared as the representative of a system struggling to secure recognition. Previous attacks had effected changes only in the personnel of the government, and had consequently satisfied only a few privileged individuals, and by no means all even of these. The system had remained unchanged, except for the fact that the favourite worked behind the scenes instead of acting in view of the spectators. The present problem was to place him under bolts and bars, and so to surmount the obstacle which prevented a true reconstitution of the government. It must be said that these assertions were utterly inconsistent with the exordium of Pitt's speech. He had then laid down the principle that existing suspicion called for an inquiry, which ought not to be prejudiced even in thought: now he laid down the imprisonment of the former minister as his object, as though his guilt had been already proved. Thus from one line of argument he passed to another, and the latter was pursued to the conclusion of his speech.

The remainder of the speech, which was of considerable length, moved entirely upon the old lines: the policy of the previous twenty years was subjected to a criticism naturally unfavourable. Pitt even attempted to add a year to the

[1] In the Tower.

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number, that which saw the decision of the South Sea business, asserting that this ought not to have been excluded from the motion. From the domestic policy of the former minister he singled out for special condemnation the excise bill, the increase of the standing army, and the purposeless equipment of naval squadrons, which latter had been undertaken only to secure votes at the recent elections: from his foreign policy, the Hanoverian convention, the abandonment of Austria, and the whole conduct of the ministry in the Spanish question, subjects which had often been discussed before with all his power of invective. Whether it was wise to condemn so unreservedly as he did, the increase of the civil list and the subsidies formerly granted for the king's personal needs, and to reproach Orford for these measures, may be considered as at least doubtful. George II. was certainly confirmed in his opinion that Pitt was not a personal adviser whom he would care to employ. Pitt concluded with a reminder to his audience, that they had not only to punish past offences, but to prevent their commission thereafter.

We do not hear that the speech made any special impression. Other speakers on either side, Lyttelton (for the motion), and Orford's friend, Winnington (against), took part in the debate, which is characterised in general as proper and respectable: Pitt's speech, to judge from the violence of its contents, could hardly fall under either of these categories. It is distinguished from his former speeches only by its wider range of information, which must have been acquired in the intervening time.[1]

The result of the conflict was entirely unexpected. The opposition had felt so secure of success that, as we have seen, they did not consider their leader's presence to be necessary. In the lobby Mr. Dodington had already discussed further motions which would follow in connection with that before the House, when it had been carried: he had proposed a meeting for that evening at the Fountain Tavern to appoint the members of the committee. But the opponents of the inquiry secured a majority of two votes: the motion was lost by 244 to 242 votes. The reasons for defeat were to be found

[1] Among his papers several fragments are found giving evidence of his studies in this year: an estimate of the French national revenue, notes upon the Spanish colonies, lists of the English colonies, with statistical details.

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in the fact that many members of the opposition were absent or abstained from voting, and that Orford's friends presented a firm front. If it be asked why the supporters of the motion were careless, and its opponents zealous and faithful, we must in the last resort undoubtedly look for answer to the influence of the king. Less energy was now expended upon projects distasteful to the king. Individuals were always to be found who did not wish for various reasons to lose the king's favour or to incur his displeasure. The party which was thus connected with the monarch could count upon the full co-operation of every member.

The defeat which Walpole's enemies had suffered did not imply a final settlement of the question. Pulteney had been attempting to strengthen his position by gaining Tory members to his side, and had incurred a rebuff from the king: he dared not fall under suspicion of lukewarmness regarding the question of inquiry, or of causing the defeat of the motion. He therefore induced Lord Limerick to review his proposal in an altered form, and to limit the proposed investigation to the last ten years. The motion came on for discussion on March 23, and led to a keen debate, in which Pitt again took part.[1]

Pitt's second speech on this subject clearly shows an improvement upon that delivered in the former debate. He repeats himself less, indeed, only when he wishes to examine some point in detail, and he uses a more moderate and more apposite style of argument. When Lord Orford's son, Horace Walpole, spoke in defence of his father, Pitt did not reply, as he would certainly have done before, with accusations of partisanship and falsehood, but commended his opponent upon thus standing at his father's side. But if it was becoming in Horace, he continued, to remember that he was the child of the accused, it behoved also the House to remember that they were the children of their country—an apt and kindly application which the young man regarded as high praise. It is noteworthy also that in this speech he found occasion to remark upon the unjustifiable dismissal of officers for political reasons. He was naturally thinking of himself and of Lord Cobham, but he mentioned no names, and expressed himself with such propriety that he showed no trace of irritation or of wounded ambition. He confined himself

[1] *Parliamentary History*, xii. 496 ff.

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to explaining the facts, that while the right of dismissal was the king's indisputable prerogative, yet Parliament had the right of calling to account the minister responsible for any obvious misuse of that prerogative. Here the special English conception of official position came to light. Such a position, even an officer's commission, was regarded as a piece of property, of negotiable value, procurable by purchase or by long service, dismissal thus being robbery, while to permit such dismissal was to reduce the official to practical servitude. Pitt asserted the desirability of a change in the law and custom in this respect, though for the moment he asked for nothing more than a moderate interpretation of the law, and for some parliamentary guarantee of security. In connection with this point he enounced some interesting theories upon national defence, from which his later methods of dealing with this point seem to have been derived. He asserted that landed proprietors had the right to arm and exercise themselves and their followers, and would like to have seen this right extensively used in order that the country might have a sufficiency of defenders against enemies at home and abroad. He may have recalled the events of his childhood when his father and grandfather raised a force of troops and placed Stratford in a posture of defence during the revolt of 1715. He was then seven years old, and the matter must have been a constant topic of family conversation.

This second and less impetuous attack upon Lord Orford was not fruitless, though not brilliantly successful. By collecting all their forces the assailants secured a majority of seven votes—252 to 245, and the private committee which was to undertake the inquiry could now be formed. It was composed of twenty-one members, of whom Pitt was one, so that he could now participate in the more difficult part of the work, the task of establishing the many charges which he had constantly and confidently levelled at the minister. Of the other members we may mention Samuel Sandys, the notorious proposer of motions; Lord Limerick, who had originated the bill; and Lord Cornbury, the brother of the Duchess of Queensberry. The remainder were for the most part Tories and dissatisfied Whigs, and Orford's friends were in a minority.

The first business of the committee was to expose the whole

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system of bribery, corruption, and extravagance which had come into use under Walpole. The nation was in high expectancy, waiting to see the disclosure of all the horrors which Pitt had indignantly reprehended. 'I fear not to declare,' he had recently asserted, 'that I expect, in consequence of such inquiry, to find that our treasure has been exhausted, not to humble our enemies or to obviate domestic insurrections, not to support our allies or to suppress our factions, but for purposes which no man who loves his country can think of without indignation, the purchase of votes, the bribing of boroughs, the enriching of hirelings, the multiplying of dependents, and the corruption of parliaments.'[1] To gain evidence on these points, books and documents were now examined, officials and supposed agents gave their depositions; but the result was so inappreciable, in comparison with the charges made, that the committee dared not publish their findings. The state revenues had, beyond doubt, been properly administered and expended, so that the main part of Pitt's accusation fell to the ground. Naturally this inadequate result was ascribed to the intrigues of the ex-minister and of his friends.

The committee was not competent to examine the accounts of the king's revenue or of Walpole's private income; there remained the so-called secret service money, a fund expended by the government upon business where secrecy was advisable in the interests of the state. There was a general opinion that the use of this fund for purposes dishonourable or dangerous to the state was a criminal matter, and one which Parliament was competent to investigate. On this point, however, the committee encountered an obstinate resistance. The subordinate agents and officials employed by the minister declined to speak, and preferred to go to prison rather than to commit any indiscretion. The chief witness, Scrope, the secretary to the treasury, supported by the opinion of lawyers and theologians, declined even to take the oath administered to witnesses. He laid the matter before the king, and was expressly forbidden to render an account of the secret service money to any one except the king himself. There was nothing more to be done. It was obvious that the ex-minister had exposed himself to attack only where he was secure of the

[1] Coxe, *Walpole*, p. 711.

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legal protection of his monarch. Once again the royal power was the rock upon which the efforts of his opponents made shipwreck.

However, other means of attaining this object remained. Many witnesses declined to speak for fear of incriminating themselves as the accomplices of the ex-minister. A bill was therefore introduced, guaranteeing amnesty to all who might be called to give evidence in Orford's case. This was a highly dangerous measure, for the reason that every one who was conscious of any kind of wrongdoing in connection with Walpole's business which the inquiry could bring to light would be directly invited to come forward with true or false accusations against the ex-minister. The inquiry was of a wholly general character, and was not restricted to any definite limits, and the number of witnesses thus interested in the affair might easily become enormous. Notwithstanding this serious difficulty, the bill passed through the House of Commons by a small majority; in the House of Lords, where political passion was less fierce, and where the traditional spirit of judicial responsibility still prevailed, where, too, the influence of the Crown was directly operative, the result was very different. Lord Chesterfield, who was now in close association with Pitt, very ill-advisedly compared the proposed amnesty with the immunity granted to robbers and murderers who turned king's evidence; Lord Hardwicke, then lord chancellor, urged the rejection of the bill with a weighty expression of expert opinion. 'The bill,' he said, 'is calculated to make defence impossible, to deprive innocence of its guard, and to let loose oppression and perjury upon the world.' The bill was thus rejected by a considerable majority, 109 votes against 57, a result honourable to the House of Lords, as showing that its opinion was determined by conviction and not by influence, however strong a concurrent factor this may have been. An attempt was made to induce the House of Commons to pass a vote of censure upon the Lords, and so to begin a conflict between the two legislative bodies; but the majority rejected the proposal, and the ground was thus cut from under the feet of the committee of inquiry. Their busy investigations had produced practically no result, and had served only to clear Orford's character. One thought must have occurred to every one; if the accusations levelled at

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him by his opponents, and especially by Pitt in the loud tones of conviction, were only partially true, some one or other of these charges must have been capable of proof, notwithstanding all the obstacles in the way of obtaining evidence. Had the contents of the exchequer been traitorously or illegally squandered, some proof of such irregularity must have come to light.

At the outset of the autumn session another bill was brought in by Waller for the appointment of a committee of inquiry: Pitt energetically supported the proposal, but so objectless an attempt could only have been dictated by party reasons. A new committee was not likely to make fresh discoveries, when all available material had been already produced. The motion was coldly received and rejected by a large majority.

Granting all the difficulties of the inquiry, its results must have been a grievous blow to Pitt's reputation. The definite and certain tone in which he had made his charges invited the presumption that he possessed special information founded upon documentary evidence, for the publication of which he was anxious. Now, when all the available evidence had been placed at his disposal, he had proved nothing. Hence it must be conceded that the whole of his behaviour had been characterised by gross recklessness. It may well be asked how his animosity could have carried him so far as to accuse a minister of crimes worthy of death without the smallest foundation for such charges. He had himself repeatedly asserted that judgment should be preceded by inquiry; yet he had stated misdeeds as though they were proved facts, and passed the severest condemnation upon them. It might be thought that such action would have been enough to cut short his political prospects.

Such was not, however, the case. All our knowledge of Pitt, as derived from the opinion of his contemporaries, his correspondence, and similar sources, shows him to have been at bottom an upright, honourable character, standing far above the average level of his associates in point of morality. So much is absolutely certain, and it is therefore inconceivable that Pitt should have permanently descended beneath the average morality of his time, and so have lost all claim to public respect. Like any other man, he might at times be seduced from the path of uprightness, but he certainly had no

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inclination to make his habitation with the ungodly. If, therefore, he followed a course of action which we are obliged to condemn, we may certainly assume that his insight and experience did not enable him as yet to realise his mistake. Indeed, the political morality of that age was in many respects at so low an ebb that Pitt's action seemed in no way extraordinary. English politicians had grown accustomed to attack their opponents with any and every means at their disposal, and to promulgate any kind of detraction which could bear a semblance of truth. Malicious and intentional slander was a weapon in common use. Pitt, however, never descended to these methods. He was honestly convinced of the perversity of Walpole's policy; he honestly believed the minister guilty of many illegalities; the mistake he made was to regard suppositions as proven facts, and to launch into exaggerations without being sure of his ground. Measured by current moral standards, his action was entirely honourable, nor did it in any degree impair his social and political reputation, even when his mistakes had been demonstrated to the world. Further, he did not succeed in attaining his object. His enemy had not been overthrown in the manner he desired, nor had he secured any personal advantage from Walpole's fall. Had he and his party become members of the government, he would probably have refrained from pressing the judicial prosecution, which might expose the falsity of his assertions. Walpole, however, proved strong enough to exclude most of his opponents, including Pitt, from the government: Pitt therefore attempted to complete his victory by an appeal to the law, which ended in another defeat for himself. The only advantage which he gained was the possibility of displaying his oratorical powers in a new light, and of standing forward as the champion of public freedom and the opponent of the system of corruption by means of which a small group of politicians had monopolised constitutional power. Here lay his prospect of future membership in the government, for in course of time the ruling party would feel the need of popularising and strengthening their government by co-operation with such a champion.

A further important result of this investigation was the fact that Pulteney lost his credit with the opposition. He had indeed attempted to avoid the suspicion of opposing the

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impeachment, but the resulting failure was ascribed to his lukewarmness. His position, again, was complicated by his connection with his former opponents, who declined to place themselves under his leadership. If he did not succeed in winning a decisive victory, of which the investigation offered some prospect, he would become a powerless dependent of the ministry, and would lose his old position with the opposition, the more so as he held no official post of his own. Thus the general result of the struggle against Walpole amounted merely to the fact that the opposition had lost their leader and several of their members. The intruders had been simply absorbed by the government, which was under Orford's influence and followed his precepts, though its methods of action were not his. A new party was now organised from the remnants of the opposition, but this never regained its former prestige, for the reason that it lacked a definite and common object of action. Pulteney finally broke with the past by accepting a peerage. His creation as Earl of Bath, which was announced at the close of the session, became the object of considerable ridicule, and lost him both the last remnants of his popularity and the seat in the House of Commons to which he had owed his influence. For a long time he continued to flatter himself with vain hopes of securing the position of prime minister. However, the new government was unable permanently to continue in its present form. Struggles and changes succeeded, largely resembling those which we have followed under Walpole's ministry. Amid all party variations Pitt steadily championed the opposition for which he had hitherto been fighting. But he too had changed. His political education was complete; he was finally emancipated from the party which had hitherto been his protection and his guide. He entered the turmoil of the new conflict as an independent power; his support was desired by many who recognised his importance; his steadily increasing influence was at all times exerted for the cause which seemed most likely to advance his prospects, and upon occasion for the vital and imperative interests of the state.

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SECTION III

THE STRUGGLE FOR OFFICE AND POWER

CHAPTER IX

THE STRUGGLE WITH CARTERET

THE information upon Pitt's private life provided by our authorities during these years of political conflict is extraordinarily scanty. In any case there are no events of importance to record. In June 1742 his friend, George Lyttelton, married the daughter of Hugh Fortescue of Filleigh, a landed proprietor in Devonshire; Pitt, though nearly thirty-four years of age, remained a bachelor. He was not as yet in a position to support a family in a style consonant with his rank, and pecuniary dependence upon a wife would have been utterly distasteful to him. He may well have wished for a home of his own. As his marriage afterwards proved, his was a character capable of creating and fully enjoying domestic happiness; for such happiness he must have yearned, the more so as his feeble health continually called for care and attention. His mother Harriet had died in 1736. His friends, as we shall soon see, were working to secure his financial independence; but, even after this object had been attained, he allowed ten years to pass before choosing a wife. Hence lack of means cannot have been his only reason for remaining single, and it is probable that his political work absorbed his attention too exclusively to leave him time to look about for a wife. It was not until marriage was suggested to him by this very work that he took the decisive step.

During the sitting of Parliament Pitt lived in London, or rather in Westminster, and, to be accurate, in Burlington

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Buildings,[1] Cork Street, near Piccadilly and Regent Street, then the aristocratic quarter: here he was close to his chief centres of operation, the Houses of Parliament and the prince's residence. In the summer and autumn months he travelled, as was usual, either in the prince's following or alone. In August and September we find him at Marble Hill and Clifden, intending to visit the Grenvilles at Wotton, Cobham at Stowe, and Lyttelton at Hagley. Some of these movements were doubtless determined by political objects. A case in point is his repeated meetings with William Murray,[2] first in October 1742 at Cornbury, at the house of the brother of his patroness, the Duchess of Queensberry, and again in November with the young Lyttelton couple at Hagley. Murray had just been appointed solicitor-general, and thus had entered the governmental camp. Pitt was naturally anxious to talk over the new situation and perhaps to arrange a compromise with his former colleague, who was to prove the strongest oratorical force among his opponents. The meetings led to no result, for the next session saw the absolute separation of the former school friends, who had fought together as boys.

Carteret had now introduced a new line of foreign policy.[3] England's wishes had hitherto met with little respect from foreign powers; Carteret's energetic conduct of foreign affairs aimed at making English influence a recognised and respected factor in the confusion of European politics. He restored the old-time system of policy, which Walpole had neglected and obscured in his anxiety to maintain the general peace. He attempted to relieve the Hapsburg monarchy of the burden of pecuniary want and the Prussian war, in order that its full power might be available for operations against France. Frederick II.'s invasion of Silesia had unfortunately shifted the balance of power, and for this Walpole had been blamed: Carteret wished to revoke this change and to lead a coalition against the Bourbon state, as had been done in the time of Louis XIV., with the object of crushing France by land and sea. This was a justifiable and a possible policy, and was more suitable to existing conditions than Walpole's peace policy. It is a policy, therefore, that cannot be forthwith condemned as irrational, for it is a disputed point whether the

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 13.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 8 f.
[3] On him and his policy, cp. Ballantyne, *Lord Carteret*. London, 1887.

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time had come for England to use abroad the strength she had acquired under Walpole's care, or whether she would have done better to consolidate that strength by continuing the policy of peace. In any case the important point was the steady and consistent prosecution of one or the other policy, and the avoidance of any conflicting or hampering circumstances. From these latter Carteret's war policy was no more free than Walpole's peace policy, and he therefore failed to attain his object. Pitt again, as in Walpole's time, was one of those responsible for placing obstacles in the way.

Carteret's measures were at first successful. He persuaded Parliament to vote rich subsidies to Maria Theresa, and induced her to come to an agreement with Frederick II. The peace of Breslau, concluded in June 1742, was the first important result of the new English policy. England had in no degree made herself subservient to the interests of Austria: the Vienna court had expected more from English friendship than the order to surrender a province. England had, on the contrary, enlisted Austria in her own interests, by making the defeat of France the sole object of her efforts. It was not to be expected that the imperial court would follow this line of policy for any length of time: the peace of Breslau could not definitely extinguish the rivalry between the two dominant German powers. Hence it was advisable to make the best possible use of a situation momentarily favourable, and to inflict a crushing blow upon the enemy. The fact that England and France were not at war, was entirely unconsidered. The international morality of those days was no obstacle to the despatch of troops to help the contending parties.

The Austrian Netherlands formed the centre of the English operations: they lay nearest to the English coast, and from thence it was possible both to menace the heart of France and to fall upon the flank and rear of French armies operating in Germany. 16,000 English troops were there concentrated, and placed under the command of Lord Stair in May, with 16,000 Hanoverians in English pay. These forces were to be joined by 6000 Hessians and 14,000 Austrians. The States-General also evinced a readiness to share in the war and to provide troops, but the apathy of the local magnates made the appearance of these latter a somewhat distant possibility. Two modes of action lay open to choice, either

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to venture an invasion, to capture Dunkirk and to march upon Paris, or to begin the struggle upon German soil. Lord Stair preferred the former alternative, and a favourable opportunity seemed to occur in August, when General Maillebois left Dunkirk and marched upon Prague. Carteret preferred the latter plan. The help of the Dutch was indispensable to cover the Netherlands, and Carteret eventually went in person to the Hague to accelerate their preparations. Before he could secure his object the favourable season was over, and the English troops were obliged to go into winter quarters at Ghent.

Such was the situation abroad when Parliament met in November 1742. No result had as yet rewarded the minister's great activity and the initial success of his measures: the new opposition thus had ground enough on which to base their attacks upon this government, although it was engaged in precisely that line of policy which the old opposition had invariably supported. This reversal of the opposition action was also favoured by the fact that the ministry was by no means united within itself. Pelham's party, supported by Orford, was in constant opposition to Carteret's party, and exerted, as previously under Walpole, though now in the contrary direction, a kind of opposition influence in foreign policy. Under Walpole the party had spoken for military action, and this action it was now attempting to hinder.

The leader of the opposition proper was Mr. Waller, a friend of Cobham's, and a convinced opponent of the continental policy; he had, for that reason, refused the offer of a post in the treasury. As he was no great speaker, Pitt became the indisputable leader in the House of Commons. He had been raised to this position by the fact that the old leaders had entered the government, where, with the exception of Carteret, they had become nonentities; and it was now of importance to him to secure that following which would enable him to play a really important part in parliamentary business, as his predecessors in the opposition had done. However, these supporters were not forthcoming; the opposition was too feeble both in numbers and influence. It became obvious that their only possible course of action, if they were to make any impression, was to follow the example of their predecessors and to join the Pelhams. For a long time the

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Pelhams remained outside the party to which group after group of the opposition had allied themselves. Even Pitt's great ministry was, like Carteret's, only an offshoot of this parent growth.

The session soon became somewhat tempestuous: the members who had hoped for office burst out in fierce anger when they realised that they had been duped. The exclusive object of this animosity was Carteret; Pulteney, now Lord Bath, had committed political suicide by accepting a peerage, and was of no account in the cabinet. It was impossible to oppose Carteret's war policy, for the reason that the opposition had formerly urged this course of action: it remained, therefore, to emphasise the mistakes which would discredit the policy in the eyes of the nation, and to invent some catchword to infuriate the people against the minister. The advantage which occurred to the king's hereditary province from the war and the concentration of troops afforded an excellent pretext for stigmatising the ministerial policy as anti-national and therefore reprehensible. 'Hanoverian policy' was the war-cry raised by the opposition, and had public opinion been able to make itself felt in Parliament, this cry would have certainly produced an effect. In view of the great importance of this Hanoverian question for the development of English policy, for the struggles of parties, and, in particular, for Pitt's career, it is advisable to devote a few words to the subject and to explain the actual facts of the case.

Legitimacy of succession was a principle but little considered when the House of Brunswick was invited to the English throne, otherwise better qualified families could have been found. In this instance the succession was decided by various political and religious interests, among which must be reckoned the close connection of the new electoral house with the imperial court. The electorship had been conferred as a reward for secession from the French alliance and adherence to the imperial federation. Brunswick thus became a member of the great coalition to which England belonged, the formation and employment of which against France had been the life-work of King William III.; this monarch was thus ready to favour and to forward the proposition for a personal union of Brunswick and England.[1] Thus to some extent the invita-

[1] Cp. Ranke, *Engl. Gesch.*, vii. 226 f.

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tion extended to the Hanoverians was a result of the great alliance: the new relationship was modelled to cohere with the existing system, which implied a union of England and Germany or a considerable part of Germany against France. So long as this alliance existed, the advantages of personal union were obvious; England enjoyed the benefit of the influence of the electorate upon imperial affairs and the use of a highly efficient army. But the relationship became inconvenient when England desired to hold aloof from continental complications, for it was then difficult to disregard the king's Hanoverian interests, supposing his province to be threatened by an invading army. In the former case the interests of these united states ran upon parallel lines, while in the latter event they were divergent. In that century, however, the trend of continental policy made a permanent withdrawal impossible for England. She felt herself too weak to secure herself and her colonies against the far superior power of France, unless the hands of the latter were tied by a conflict upon German soil. For reasons of domestic policy, neutrality might have its advantages at times, as under Walpole, but neutrality always involved a disadvantage, for France was then free to weaken her neighbours on the east. The general disruption of Germany and the impotency of the imperial government allowed France to choose her own time for aggression. England was therefore obliged, except in extraordinary cases, to stimulate and support the German states, especially Austria and Prussia, in their resistance to French aggrandisement, and for this purpose Hanover was extremely valuable.

Apart from the secession threatened by Prussia, the situation during Carteret's ministry was very much as it had been in the time of William III.; hence the Hanoverian connection was profitable, and an attempt to make the best use of it was a rational policy. The sacrifices necessary to secure the adherence and to strengthen the resistance of the German princes, and in general to continue the struggle on the Continent, were often a heavy burden upon England, and it was easy to represent the imposition of these burdens as due to the connection with Hanover. The constant outcry that English resources were being sacrificed in the interests of Hanover was at bottom nothing more than a groan at the insurmountable opposition of the superior forces of France, though it was to

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this opposition that England certainly owed her great development in subsequent years. English statesmen had repeatedly attempted to exclude Hanover from their calculations, and had as repeatedly come to the conclusion that exclusion was impossible and would expose the country to the utmost danger. It was not mere consideration of the king's interests, but the vital interests of the country, which demanded the protection of the electorate. Had the connection with Hanover never existed, England would have been forced to help the enemies of France in Germany, and the process would perhaps have been more expensive than it now was. Not until the Seven Years' War had displayed the impotence of France was it possible to neglect the interests of Hanover. George I. and George II. may have been considering their own dynastic advantage, but this made no essential difference in the general situation.

In the session of 1742-3 the House was asked to vote the supplies necessary for the sixteen thousand Hanoverians who were then concentrated at Liége. Pitt repeatedly raised his voice against the proposal, and is said to have spoken eloquently—like ten thousand angels, in the extravagant phrase of his friend Richard Grenville.[1] This may have been true of his speeches as regards their form; few could rival Pitt in sheer power of rhetoric, but we cannot allow this praise of the matter of his speeches when we examine his arguments. The first speech to which Grenville refers was delivered at the end of November and has not been preserved, but it cannot have varied greatly from the speech of December 10,[2] of which we have a reproduction.

The first point upon which Pitt attacks the ministry is the inactivity of the Hanoverian troops. We know why they were not brought into action, and that Carteret was not to blame for their forced immobility during the year. Pitt's argument is thus erroneous; he regarded a force retained in passivity at or near the seat of war as *eo ipso* inoperative. The fact is that the presence of such a force and the continued possibility of its immediate advance must influence the enemy's dispositions and the course of the war. He inveighs against the squandering of money and demands the disbanding

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i., November 22, 1742.
[2] Thackeray, i. 89 ff. *Parliamentary History*, xii. 1033 ff.

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of the troops, though he is forced to admit that an army corps cannot be unceremoniously disbanded in war simply for the reason that no special operation is in view at the moment. The fact that a parliamentary orator of Pitt's reputation could utter such absurdities is an indication of the fact that the English were not naturally a military nation. It is hardly to be supposed that he was expressing his own inward convictions, for, as we shall see, he had no small capacity for military affairs.

His arguments upon the political situation are almost equally unsound, though it must be admitted that he handled an essentially mistaken cause in very dexterous style, and made it seem plausible to superficial thinkers. He showed that England had entirely fulfilled her obligations to Austria and had defended the Pragmatic Sanction, and he asked why England of all nations should display such signal uprightness, when others were no less bound by the conventions to which they were parties. As a matter of fact, it was not regard for honour but self-interest which impelled the English ministers to abide by the terms of the convention. Where that interest was not affected, as it was by the peace of Breslau, they calmly left their allies to shift for themselves. Pitt, however, carried his argument further. Hanover was a party to the Pragmatic Sanction, and he now proceeded to explain that the hiring of Hanoverian troops prevented that state from fulfilling its obligations, and practically deprived Maria Theresa of an auxiliary contingent of troops. England, he asserted, could hire troops elsewhere; and George II., who respected conventions no less as elector than as king, would then be able to send his own troops into the field at his own expense. By advising him to hire the Hanoverian troops for England his ministers were exposing him to the temptation of breaking the obligations incumbent on him as elector, a temptation difficult to resist. The measure should therefore be rejected.

From a theoretical point of view, there was some truth in Pitt's arguments. If troops were to be hired, it was certainly absurd to hire those which would take the field in any case. But theories which are incompatible with practice cannot become a basis of statesmanlike action. Pitt, no doubt, was aware, like every one else, that Hanover had not espoused the cause of the Queen of Hungary independently, and that

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its obligations had been fulfilled either formally, that is, ineffectually, or not at all. The electorate, following the habitual practice of the petty German states, had politely retired from its responsibilities. Any threat was excuse enough for concluding a convention of neutrality, and this was what George II. had done in his position as elector during the period of Walpole's ministry. Where self-interest was wanting, vigorous co-operation was not to be expected, either from Hanover or from England. If England required the help of the electorate, she would have to bear the expense. Troops might certainly have been hired elsewhere, but it was a special advantage to have the certainty of securing through the king the services of a large, compact, and highly trained body of troops. It would not have been easy to find others equally capable or reliable. To deprive the king of the advantages of the arrangement, and to give them to other and less closely connected princes, would have betokened a purposeless animosity to the monarch of which Carteret was incapable. Pitt's arguments were obviously intended to embarrass and discredit the government and not to improve the situation. He reproached the ministers for inducing the king to avoid fulfilment of his obligations, and stigmatised the king as a breaker of treaties. His assertion that Hanover was no less interested than England in checking France showed either a total ignorance of the situation in Germany or a deliberate intention to obscure the truth. At that time the territorial states were not greatly disturbed by the extension of French influence, or even by annexations on the western frontier, provided that no loss on their part was the consequence.

After Pitt had thus attempted to show that the policy of hiring the Hanoverians was erroneous, he seized the opportunity of uttering a strong criticism of England's relations in general with the electoral state. He gave a novel aspect to the well-worn theme of the sacrifice of English interests to Hanover, though he showed not the smallest power of appreciating the undercurrents of continental policy. 'This powerful, this great, this mighty nation,' he cried, 'is considered only as a province to a despicable electorate.' We may well imagine the effect produced upon the king by this kindly description of his beloved Hanover. Moreover, the electorate was by no means despicable in view of England's

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position at that time. Including the districts politically dependent upon it, the area of Hanover was about half that of Scotland, and its million inhabitants could well compare with the population of England, which then amounted to no more than six millions.

In support of his assertions Pitt referred to the favours shown to Hanover hitherto: many of these were, in truth, indefensible, or defensible only upon the supposition that the king's private interests were coincident with those of England. But Pitt made the mistake of not distinguishing the period of insular from that of continental policy. The king's attempts to improve the position of Hanover at England's expense, which were made during the period of peace with France, ought to have been differentiated from similar efforts made during the time of conflict. Measures that might have been unjustifiable in the former case were necessary in the latter. No argument for the immediate opposition to Hanover was supplied by Pitt's exposure of that country's earlier demands and of the disadvantage thus imposed upon England. He concluded by casting in the king's teeth his frequent visits to his province, 'that delightful country,' sarcasm which must have deeply wounded the king's affection for his native land.

Pitt's violent attack upon the government was naturally resented. Upon December 14,[1] some days later, when the debate was continued, Murray, who was Pitt's equal if not his superior, proceeded to refute the attacks of the opposition in clear, precise, and judicial language. He was especially careful to expose the inconsistency of which the opposition were guilty in now attempting to embarrass the policy of co-operation with Austria against France which they had formerly urged and supported. He drew the obvious conclusion, that self-interest rather than patriotism was the motive of their action. Pitt was forced to summon all his perspicacity and oratorical power to repel this dangerous onslaught, or at least to provide a defence outwardly successful. He boldly asserted that wholly different questions were now at stake; the war policy was not the issue of the moment; to this the opposition assented as they had done before. What they were discussing was certain measures

[1] *Memorials of James Oswald*, Edinburgh, 1825.—Oswald to Home, December 14, 1742.

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undertaken by the ministers for the purposes of the war. He then attempted to refute Murray's arguments in detail. The full report of the duel between these very different and yet equally competent orators has not come down to us. The opinion of one present[1] represents Murray as giving the impression of an advocate who defended a case in workmanlike fashion, while Pitt was the statesman who enthusiastically advanced his own convictions to inspire his hearers to action for their own advantage and for the salvation of their country. 'Murray gains your attention by the perspicuity of his arguments and the elegance of his diction. Pitt commands your attention and respect by the nobleness, the greatness of his sentiments, the strength and energy of his expressions, and the certainty you are in of his always rising to a greater elevation both of thought and style.' This description is entirely consistent with my former analysis of Pitt's style of oratory. Externals were Pitt's great weapon and his chief means of concealing defects of matter, while his theatrical power of appearing wholly absorbed in the part he elected to play was most effective. Even if his arguments were not the expression of his inward convictions, the act of speaking suggested conviction to himself, and this facile exaggeration led him to use the most extravagant language. He produced the general impression of a fanatic, an inflexible adherent of the policy in question; yet on another occasion he would calmly discuss, with full attention to detail, a reversal of the said policy, and prove with no less convincing power the justice and the necessity of the change. Murray was a different character. He preferred to fight on the side of the government, when his own views corresponded with the measures he had to defend, and to expound the truth of the case by force of clear argument. The judicial calm which characterised his speeches made him appear rather a forensic orator than a man inspired by convictions of his own. In argumentative force his speeches were certainly superior to Pitt's.

During this session the government was strong enough to surmount every obstacle raised by the opposition. Pitt's speeches produced no visible effect. The money for the English and for the hired troops was voted without demur.

[1] James Oswald, Scottish member of Parliament, born 1715 (Thackeray, i. 96).

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Carteret was thus able, as supplies were assured, to spend the winter developing his plans for the next campaign. He decided to conduct operations in Germany, and the advance upon the Rhine was begun in March, while the Dutch undertook the task of protecting the Netherlands. The king and Carteret went to the Continent in person, to watch the course of events in the immediate neighbourhood. While they were at Dettingen, near Aschaffenburg, the battle of June 27 was fought, in which the king personally shared, with the result of a victory for the British arms. It could not be called a decisive victory, for it served rather to liberate the English army from a highly dangerous position than to crush the forces of the enemy; but its moral effect was very great. Victory was victory, and the details mattered little in comparison with the result. The immediate consequence was the retirement of the Wittelsbach emperor, Charles VII., from the French alliance: he had nothing to expect in that quarter when the French retreated to the Rhine. He also agreed to renounce all claim to the Hapsburg succession: so much Carteret had demanded of him before the battle took place. In return for these concessions he was to be helped out of his financial embarrassments by subsidies of English money. Frederick II. of Prussia made no objection to the agreement, and the possibility thus presented itself of driving back the French into their own country, with the consent of the emperor and the co-operation of several princes. The object of the English continental policy seemed to have been attained, and Carteret, its most zealous supporter, believed that success was at hand. But his calculations were upset by his enemies in the ministry, especially by the Duke of Newcastle.[1] Jealous of the good fortune of their colleague, who acted as leader of the cabinet and usually disregarded their wishes, they declined to vote the required supplies, with the result that the whole scheme of operations fell to the ground, while Carteret was held responsible by the public for the failure. As the opposition had formerly thwarted Walpole's peace policy, so now they put an end to Carteret's military proposals. They opposed an insular to a continental policy, preferring to conclude peace with France and to leave Germany to shift for itself.

[1] Ballantyne, p. 275 f.

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Walpole's intentions, which they were now carrying out, were defensible during his ministry, but their sudden intrusion into a contrary policy was bound to result in embarrassment and loss.

This event is to be explained by an important change which had recently taken place with the cabinet.[1] A few days after the battle of Dettingen, Lord Wilmington, the nominal prime minister, had died, and Lord Bath, with Carteret's approval, had applied for the vacant post. He, however, had been anticipated by Henry Pelham. He had already secured the reversion of this post with the support of Orford, whose influence with the king was still paramount, except in questions of continental policy, and his appointment followed in August. The king continued to support Carteret, whose policy was in harmony with his own ideas, and the change of ministers was at the outset nothing more than a formal procedure; but Pelham's promotion implied, none the less, a reorganisation of the cabinet upon the old basis, and a further growth of the opposition movement. The adherents of Bath and Carteret were adroitly removed, and their places were filled by Orford's friends and relatives. Thus Orford's son-in-law, Lord Cholmondeley, became privy seal, Henry Fox was given a treasury post, and Pelham occupied the position of chancellor of the exchequer as well as that of premier. They could not supplant Carteret in the king's confidence, but, as we have seen, they were able to cause him a considerable amount of embarrassment, for in financial questions he was dependent upon the cabinet majority. These embarrassments were likely to increase if the Pelham group proved able to exert a definite influence upon Parliament when the next session began. The only result of the campaign which Carteret had gained was the treaty of Worms, by which Austria was secured in Italy: for this inadequate outcome the Pelham group was to blame, but Carteret, as controlling the foreign policy of the country, would be held responsible.

However, the opposition was confused by an intricate tangle of conflicting opinions and relationships, which made a concentrated attack impossible. As under Walpole's ministry, the general object was to overthrow the minister

[1] Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 734 f. Ballantyne, p. 280 ff.

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or to reduce him to impotence; but at that time the opposition had a common policy: they wished to change the foreign policy of the country, whereas no such change was now desired. The only possible point of agreement was resistance to Hanoverian favouritism and to the maintenance of the Hanoverian contingent, but the king's views on this subject deterred many possible supporters. Only the most resolute members of the opposition, especially Chesterfield, Lyttelton, and Pitt, felt no hesitation in applying leverage at this point. They held a meeting in November, and resolved, while advising the maintenance of the continental army, to demand that the electoral regiments should be replaced by other hired forces; they were even prepared to open negotiations with France in accordance with Pelham's idea, under the condition that these should be conducted in full concert with the Dutch.[1] Their programme was thus opposed to the ministerial policy upon side issues, for the opposition on the main question was rather apparent than real, as the demand for the opening of negotiations pledged them to nothing. If their attack succeeded they would be able to drive Carteret out of office by rejecting his policy, without at the same time binding themselves to any new line of action. There seemed no great prospect of success, for the reason that the project failed to commend itself to those in whose hands the final decision lay.

With these ideas Pitt entered upon the new parliamentary campaign, in which he not only increased his oratorical reputation, but made himself a name in other respects. On December 1, 1743, he opened the attack in a lengthy speech.[2] The subject of debate was the address presented by the Commons in answer to the speech from the throne. The proposed form of address contained, together with the usual phrases of subservience, an unreserved approval of the foreign policy of the country. Pitt declared himself unable to assent to this clause, until he had been convinced of the advisability of the measures in question, and of the reality of the successes claimed. For this purpose the brevity of the official announce-

[1] 'Replacing the Hanoverians with other hired forces, keeping an army in readiness on the continent, and treating with France in that posture, but under this restriction, that no step whatever should be taken, but in concert with the Dutch.'—Glover, p. 13.

[2] Thackeray, i. 99 ff. *Parliamentary History*, xiii. 152 ff.

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ments was inadequate, and private information led him to suppose that the contrary was the case. The first point in the speech that strikes our notice is the effort made by Pitt to prove the consistency of his attitude, and to anticipate any possible reproaches on this score. He emphasised with even greater energy than before the fact that the new minister had gone to the opposite extreme of the policy pursued by his predecessor, and that it was consequently as justifiable to oppose the new system as the old. 'Our former minister,' he said, 'betrayed the interests of his country by his cowardice: our present minister would sacrifice them to his quixotism. Our former minister was for negotiating with all the world: our present minister is for fighting against all the world. Our former minister was for agreeing to every treaty, however dishonourable: our present minister will give ear to none, although the most reasonable that can be desired.' Whether his language was as free as it is here represented, or whether the antitheses and the injustice they do to either minister are the work of the editor who rewrote the notes of the speech, must remain a doubtful point. In any case, Pitt's authorship is not impossible, for neither in this nor in other speeches did he shrink from exaggeration.

In order the better to conceal his own change of front, he now proceeded to give a comprehensive description of the whole course of continental policy since the outbreak of the disturbances in Austria, pointing out the errors both of Carteret's and of Walpole's measures. He attempted to show that these measures were similar, and productive of similar results, though inspired by utterly different motives. Walpole —this was the central point of his exposition—had delayed from carelessness and cowardice to force Maria Theresa to an immediate submission to King Frederick's demands, a submission which would have enabled her, at comparatively small cost, to overthrow her other enemies. Carteret, on the other hand, out of pure love of war, had allowed Austria to exploit him for chimerical purposes, for the restoration of the old Hapsburg power, which was impossible under the new conditions and unnecessary for England; England's object, the checking of France, could be equally well attained by an extended system of alliance. At this point his excitement led him to assert that Carteret's entire policy had been deter-

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mined by the desire of providing a subsidy for the king, by hiring 16,000 Hanoverian troops. He thus accused both ministers of the same blunder, of leading the Queen of Hungary into a perverted line of action, which could only prove detrimental to herself and to England. In Carteret's case he established his charge upon the fact that the minister had not forced Maria Theresa to conclude peace at the right moment, when the enemy was blockaded in Prague; this he could easily have done by threatening a withdrawal of English support: probably he had held out to her the prospect of acquisitions upon French soil, a supposition which would explain her disinclination to peace. In any case he had been too eager with his offers of English help, and had depreciated the value of English support in consequence: requests for help from other quarters should have been awaited, and higher demands might then have been issued.

This criticism of past diplomacy shows that Pitt had followed the course of events with eager interest, that he had attempted to gain information from every available source, and that he understood pretty clearly the nature of England's fundamental interests, and the means whereby they might be secured. He fully recognised the necessity of using German forces to check France, and much of his criticism upon individual points is admirable. But the most important means to forming a correct judgment of Carteret's policy, a knowledge of documentary evidence, was out of his power. This was a privilege reserved to members of the government, and without it only vague and ill-founded assertions could be made, upon the correctness of which any doubts were justifiable. It was unreasonable to reproach the minister with his failure to force a peace from Maria Theresa, when, for all Pitt knew, an attempt in this direction might have been already made, or the most cogent reasons against such an attempt might have been forthcoming. It was unreasonable, again, to stigmatise the failure to conclude an alliance with the emperor as a blunder, when the resistance of the cabinet to this proposal was unknown. It was certainly easy to offer advice after the event, when there was no danger that the adviser would be asked to take the responsibility of following his own counsels; it was easy also to prophesy the great successes that would follow the adoption of such advice, and

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to draw brilliant comparisons between these and the results of the measures actually brought to achievement. There was, indeed, much sound sense in Pitt's assertions, and he proffered many useful suggestions. For this reason this speech is on a higher level than his former utterances, and is evidence of an advance in the process of his political development. Pitt certainly possessed the capacity to guide independently the fortunes of the state, as indeed he afterwards showed. Parliament, however, was not the place where this kind of knowledge and power could be turned to the best advantage: in the first instance the necessary materials were not at his disposal, and secondly, the object of his attack was of a wholly different nature. He was engaged in furthering party interests, and all he needed to justify his object was the outward show of diplomatic and political capacity. His actual possession of such capacity was a matter of minor importance.

The military criticisms of the speech stand upon a somewhat different footing. The subject-matter here was less obscure, and an expert might well have been able to pass a comparatively competent judgment, even though he had not actually shared in the operations. Here Pitt gave evidence of expert knowledge. His acquaintance with the principles of strategy and tactics was certainly far superior to that of most of his colleagues, and justifies the supposition that he continued to regard the military profession as his own, though he had been out of the army for seven years. His later behaviour gives further confirmation of the theory. His observations upon the campaign of 1743 are clearly the best part of his speech, and prove that he was continually occupied with military problems. As in this instance the exposure of the truth would serve the interests of his party, he was not now obliged as formerly to hide his own convictions behind a series of military absurdities.

Pitt's chief reproaches were levelled with entire justice at the slowness of movement and the long inaction of the English army, even after the advance into Germany had been decided. Here he struck the weakness, not only of the English commanders, but of most generals of that age, and indeed of generalship at large as then practised, which knew nothing of rapid movement compelling a decision and creating advantage. Pitt was a follower of the new theories which Frederick the

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Great was bringing into use, if he had not entirely adopted them, and which were to inspire the art of war with new life. Pitt employed them himself, as far as he was able, during his ministry, and with admirable result. It was thus inevitable that he should strongly condemn the leisurely and methodical operations of the English and their allies, for which, indeed, Carteret was least to blame. He declined to be dazzled by the ultimate success. He recognised and stated the fact that the battle which had taken place was not due to the energy and courage of the English leaders, but was the only way out of a difficult situation. He showed that the victory was not the fruit of the tactical skill or generalship of the British commanders, but was caused by a blunder of Grammont, who gave away the advantage of position by a premature advance. Pitt carried this line of argument somewhat too far: the power to use an enemy's mistakes is an important element in military capacity. If these mistakes are to deprive the victor of his glory, the fame of many a general would be unduly diminished, for mistakes will always be made. Pitt's denunciation of the Hanoverians as cowards in comparison with the brave English troops was the outcome of his tendency to exaggeration and did not represent the facts. The speech shows increased understanding of diplomatic and especially of military affairs, but it is strongly and often wrongly prejudiced by party interest.

The following debates, in which Pitt also took an important part, dealt chiefly with two points, the dismissal of the Hanoverians and the concert with Holland; upon these the opposition either advanced proposals of their own, or opposed the ministerial policy. Pitt's views upon the former of these questions have been fully explained; however, he developed some new arguments. He declared that his private information showed the position of the English commanders to be inferior to that of the Hanoverians:[1] this was a statement based upon insufficient evidence, but it naturally impressed an English audience. He then attempted to prove, with full and accurate detail, that Maria Theresa was able to collect and to maintain with the amount of money expended upon the English army a far greater force, and that it was therefore advisable to disband the English troops and expend the money in supporting her.[2] Here Pitt failed to perceive that it

[1] Thackeray, i. 119. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 127 ff.

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could not be a matter of indifference to England whether the army created by English wealth owed allegiance to England or to the queen; whoever provided the money, an Austrian army would be devoted in the first instance to Austrian interests, and English influence upon the Continent would be considerably reduced by such a measure. Moreover, the queen would never venture to enlist so great an army as Pitt thought possible, merely upon the uncertain guarantee of English subsidies. He proved that 72,000 troops might be engaged in the place of the 37,000 in English pay. Either the queen would have been forced to hire whole contingents, which would have cost her no less than the English, or she would be obliged to re-organise her own army, and the subsidies would then have been inadequate to meet the expense of enlistment, organisation, and training. If it should prove necessary to disband the army in a few years, owing to the conclusion of the war or the withdrawal of English help, the invested capital would be entirely lost; hence she would only embark upon such an enterprise if capital were provided in the form of higher subsidies, and here again the expense would be prohibitive from England's point of view. Pitt's calculations were intended merely to throw dust in the eyes of inexperienced members of Parliament, and not as a basis for actual practice. The fact became obvious after Carteret's fall, when his arguments were seriously considered.

As regards the second question, the opposition demanded that in all questions of war and negotiation the country should act in concert with Holland. On this point Pitt was again opposed by Murray,[1] who completely demonstrated the unreliability of any scheme which bound the country to wait upon the conclusions of the apathetic Dutch government. Pitt replied that this necessity would be a valuable check upon the rashness of English ministers. His general policy was that which he developed in a final set speech of January 17, 1744; he asserted that it was against the interests of England to give further support to Austria or to reduce the power of France: the aggressive policy of Louis XIV. was not to be apprehended from the present King of France, and it was therefore possible to bring the war to an end. These opinions were entirely contradicted by his later policy; as

[1] Thackeray, i. 120 ff.

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minister he was never weary of insisting that the power of France must be utterly destroyed.

Thus we see that Pitt held firmly to the programme which he had agreed upon with his friends, and that he was able to adduce excellent arguments in support of the proposals which those friends favoured under the agreement, and to refute the ministerial objections: the whole object of his action was to embarrass the ministry in general and Carteret in particular. But he could not secure any actual success. All questions were decided in favour of the ministry and by considerable majorities. Orford especially, who had objected to the foreign policy of the ministry while he was in office and was now fundamentally opposed to it, rose above the petty spite of the opposition.[1] He could see no advantage in attacking the Hanoverian troops, when it was impossible to change the policy as a whole, and regarded such attacks as likely to cause needless irritation to the king. He therefore advised the retention of the electoral contingents, and at a dinner given by Hanbury Williams, whose acquaintance we have made as one of Pitt's school companions,[2] he induced his ministerial friends to adopt his view. Carteret had to thank him for the ease with which he was able to pass his measures and for the fact that the Pelham group abstained from raising obstacles to his action.

During this winter another question came up for consideration, whether the British troops should be maintained and stationed in Flanders any longer.[3] Pitt, Lyttelton and Chesterfield, in accordance with their programme, were prepared to vote for the retention of the troops: it was impossible to disarm the government in the middle of a war. But their political friends, especially Bubb Dodington and Lord Cobham,[4] were of a different opinion. They considered that the overthrow of the ministry was of more importance than the welfare of the state. Dodington also felt a certain jealousy of Pitt, whose attitude might easily take him a step further on the road to office: he persuaded Pitt to be present at a meeting of the opposition in the Fountain Tavern, their

[1] Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 736 f.
[2] See p. 78 above.
[3] On this affair, see Glover, p. 20 ff.
[4] *Grenville Papers*, i. 423. In George Grenville's notes of the year 1762 this event is wrongly dated 1743.

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usual headquarters. Pitt imprudently agreed, with the result that he was eventually forced to yield to the earnest representations of the majority. He stated that 'in view of the unanimity with which the meeting had decided to refuse the further maintenance of the English forces, he would regard the views of his friends so far as to vote with them, though against his own convictions: he hoped, however, that they would be satisfied with his vote and would not demand a speech.' This was the course which he pursued on the following day, January 11, 1714, when the question was debated in the House of Commons. It was a piece of great imprudence on his part: he had hitherto been the mouthpiece of the opposition, and his silence on so important a subject inevitably betrayed the fact that he was in full sympathy with the proposal, and voted against it for reasons foreign to himself. We can understand that this would damage his reputation if we remember that Pitt had always been most solicitous to maintain his character for independence and unadulterated patriotism, and that his powers of emotional oratory had given him the name of a bold and often ruthless champion, if not of truth, at any rate, of profound conviction. The diplomatic attitude which he now adopted was inconsistent with this picture: it reduced him to the level of other politicians, and shook the confidence of his adherents. Richard Glover may not be wholly wrong when he asserts in his memoirs that Pitt's silence was more advantageous to the court than his open support of the government would have been.

The consciousness that he had placed himself in a false position may possibly explain the decision with which he supported the government upon another question, involving not merely the advantage but also the security of the state.[1] He may have hoped in this way to recover what prestige he had lost. It had been discovered that preparations were going forward in France for bringing Charles Edward, the Pretender's son, to England, and for restoring the Stuarts with French help. The king sent a message to the Parliament on this question on February 18, 1744, and both Houses forthwith returned addresses empowering the king to make all necessary reinforcements by land and sea. The motion was introduced by Henry Pelham in the Commons, and Pitt was

[1] Thackeray, i. 134 ff.

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one of the speakers in support of the address. He was so far faithful to the views which he had formerly urged against Walpole as to express doubts upon the reality of the danger. He regarded the project as an attempt upon the part of France to terrorise England and to lower her credit, and he declined to believe that any one in the kingdom would be likely to make common cause with the French; on the other hand, he declared that the precautionary measures proposed were imperatively necessary. 'If confidence is ever to be placed in ministers,' he said, 'it is at the present crisis, and as they are accountable to Parliament for the use they make of that confidence, I am for agreeing to the motion.' We note the careful terms in which he formulated his assent, in order to avoid contradiction of his previous utterances. He had so often declared the ministry to be unworthy of confidence that he could not now promise confidence without reserve. He therefore represented the case as exceptional, and as justifying a departure from his principles. Further, he appealed to the parliamentary rights of control, which was a means of preventing any breach of confidence on the part even of ministers whom he regarded as capable of such action. Thus, while supporting the proposal, he preserved his attitude of hostility to the ministry. He came into agreement, however, with Pelham on the point that the government should confine its unlimited power of discretion solely to measures of immediate and urgent necessity.

Upon this occasion another point of dissension was compromised. Lord Orford naturally grasped the opportunity of delivering his views upon a danger which he had long foreseen, and for which he had striven to provide.[1] In a brilliant speech in the House of Lords he showed that he still retained his old capacities and powers of statesmanship. It was chiefly his influence that secured a unanimous vote in favour of the address. His action had a further effect: the Prince of Wales was induced to forget his former hostility. He thanked the orator personally for his words, and removed the decision which had excluded Orford's family from his court. As Pitt appositely remarked in his speech, the common danger was an influence which tended to compose existing differences. It speedily passed by, as the French fleet was scattered by a

[1] Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 737 ff.

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storm shortly after setting sail, and was forced to return: but the consequence was an official declaration of war between these powers which had been so long at variance. For Pitt in particular the event betokened a fundamental change in his political position. It opened to him the prospect of entry to the service of the state. But obstacles still lay before him. The minister must first be overthrown, against whom his recent attacks had been chiefly directed.

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CHAPTER X

CARTERET'S FALL

CARTERET had succeeded in maintaining his position against all the attacks of his colleagues and his avowed enemies throughout the session of 1743-4; he had been enabled to avoid any serious danger of defeat by the fact that his diplomatic and strategical reputation had been unshaken, and indeed secured by the victory of Dettingen, and that he had enjoyed the advantage of Orford's support upon all decisive questions. The successes of 1743 had not entirely corresponded with his expectations, but were tangible facts which he could offer to the nation. The new year also opened favourably. The failure of the attempted French invasion increased his credit with the nation, and the consequent outbreak of war with France seemed to make his experience of foreign policy indispensable at this juncture. His position seemed secure upon every side. But in this same year a change in the course of events enabled his enemies to deliver a final and a crushing blow.

The English army had returned to Flanders in August, and was awaiting the order to begin a new series of operations. The king proposed to pay a second visit to the seat of war in company with Carteret, upon whom he continued to bestow his full confidence, with the intention of adding to the laurels he had already won. The Pelhams, however, placed obstacles in the way. They declined to see the king thus surrendered to the influence of his favourite minister, and threatened to retire if he left England. As the ministry could not be carried on without their support, George II. was obliged to submit. Lord Stair was recalled to England, and the Flanders command was given to the aged Marshal Wade, whose apathy and carelessness precluded all prospect of success, the more so

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as the French had begun a vigorous and definite plan of campaign. Louis XV. commanded the army in person, and when he went to Metz in June to oppose the advance of Prince Charles of Lorraine upon Alsace he left the command in the energetic and experienced hands of the Maréchal de Saxe, with whom Wade could not for a moment be compared. Moreover, Wade was an adherent of the Pelhams: he respected their wishes, and either failed to carry out Carteret's orders or to observe the spirit of them, with the result that the French were able to operate in Flanders much as they pleased. They steadily pushed onwards, and it soon became clear that the campaign was a total failure from the English point of view. The ultimate disasters were accelerated by the dissensions in the cabinet.

A further unmerited misfortune to Carteret was the fact that the King of Prussia again took up arms. It then appeared that Carteret had failed to secure any permanent understanding between the two German powers by the peace of Breslau, and his prestige suffered heavily in consequence. Fortune favoured Frederick II. at the outset. Prague fell into his hands, and his army corps pushed on far beyond that city: the Austrian monarchy seemed again to have fallen into the extremity of danger. Reverses soon began, and the Prussian army was obliged to make a disastrous retreat into Bohemia; but the news reached England too late to check the progress of events. Carteret's position was weakened by the second Silesian war more than by any other event.

The chief agents in bringing this change to pass were the Pelham group. They were able to rouse public opinion against the minister, and to use it for their own purposes. Everything that injured the state and exasperated the nation, the incompetence of Wade, the unreliability of the Dutch, the successful aggression of Frederick II., was laid to Carteret's charge, and this though his accusers were solely to blame for the gloominess of the outlook, if blame was the word to use. They were but repeating their former opposition to Walpole and to Carteret himself during the previous year. They represented him as tyrannical, self-seeking, and ambitious, though there is not the smallest doubt that his every action was inspired by patriotic motives, however disputable its advisability. Carteret, however, was not a natural politician:

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he was a straightforward, unconcerned optimist, careless of intrigue, and ignorant of hypocrisy. He made no effort to conceal his contempt for the Duke of Newcastle, constantly ignored his colleagues in his conduct of important state business, and scorned to bestow confidence where he had found none. Hence his opponents must speedily have found their position intolerable; for them retirement or the overthrow of Carteret were the only alternatives. The latter course was impeded by one considerable obstacle, the king's will: George II. would not throw his favourite overboard, and the Pelhams were resolved not to evacuate their position except in the direst extremity. Newcastle certainly talked of retirement, as he had often done before, but he did not seriously entertain the idea so long as any means of resistance offered itself.

The Pelham group had long been contemplating the possibility of reinforcing their power by the enlistment of new adherents. Orford had mooted the idea in 1743,[1] when he urged the advisability of enrolling his former colleagues, and of securing recruits from Cobham's following. The former plan had already been accomplished, as we have seen in the preceding chapter: but the new strength proved inadequate, and negotiations were opened with the opposition, who accepted them readily. Here too the necessity of alliance with some stronger power had become obvious; the last session had shown that the opposition, as it was, could only play a very minor part, and expended its energies to no purpose.

Lord Bolingbroke had recently reappeared in the opposition camp. He had paid several visits to England after Walpole's fall, and had permanently established himself during the autumn of 1743 in a house he had inherited in Battersea. He lived with Lord Marchmont, to whom he had let the house, and his time was so entirely occupied with literary work and literary feuds that he could give but little attention to politics. Pitt forthwith renewed his old relations with Bolingbroke, who was generally regarded as having inspired Pitt's proposals.[2] How far this supposition was correct must remain doubtful, but both men seem to have agreed upon the main point, that an alliance with the Pelhams was desirable. As

[1] Orford to Pelham: Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 221.
[2] Glover, p. 17.

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early as the summer of 1743 Pitt had submitted a similar plan to Lord Chesterfield, who had signified his approval; but this was a much less sweeping project, and proposed the subordination of Carteret to the Pelhams without contemplating his removal. The members of the party, as a whole, were ready to support the plan: the only dissentient was Waller, who could not entirely trust the Pelhams. The plan was not put into execution, as the governmental parties were able to pass the winter in tolerable agreement. It was not until the summer of 1744 that the question was again brought forward.

Upon the whole the opposition had combined admirably, as we have seen in the course of the debates upon the English troops in Flanders. In the House of Commons the opposition leaders formed a committee, whose regulations were followed by the members of the party; the committee was thus styled in jest the anti-ministerial cabinet.[1] It was composed of the following members of the House of Commons: Dodington, Pitt, Sir John Hynde Cotton, Sir Watkin W. Wynn, Waller, and Lyttelton. This party junta was completed by the following members of the Lords: the Duke of Bedford, Lord Chesterfield, Lord Gower, and Viscount Cobham.[2] When any important question was under discussion these members were accustomed to meet, and to take the decision of the majority, if unanimity was not forthcoming. Upon this occasion there was absolute unanimity upon the main question of the desirability of a union with the Pelhams. But the problem of the means by which this object could be obtained produced great diversity of opinion, a diversity which exposed the individual leanings and objects of the several disputants.

The opposition had always appeared in the character of patriots: they were the champions of the nation against despotism and corruption, against malpractices and dangerous policy. These admirable sentiments had formed the basis of their claim to guide the fortunes of the state. Those members who had passed from the opposition to the government upon the change of ministry in 1742 had realised absolutely none of these splendid promises: apart from questions of foreign policy, they had quietly followed the lead of their predecessors, and though their foreign policy had taken a different course, it

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. [2] Glover, p. 23 f.

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had been no less dangerous, as the present opposition vehemently protested. It might even be said that their foreign policy had gone beyond due bounds, and that their obvious incompetence necessitated their resignation, while in other matters they had been unable to make head against the remnants of the old corrupt ministry. This adherence to old habits ought not to be taken as implying dishonesty on the part of the opposition patriots to which the ministerial members in question had belonged. Such being the view of the present opposition, the irresistible conclusion followed, that if the patriots again united with the remnants of the old ministry a repetition of these mistakes must be avoided, and a secure guarantee must be provided for the performance of the claims which the patriots advanced. Upon questions of foreign policy they were more or less agreed; but for domestic affairs it was an indispensable condition that certain reforms should be carried out, which would put a stop to the system of corruption.

This question was, in fact, brought up for discussion. Some of the opposition leaders, Cobham in particular, remained loyal to their party principles, and demanded that any convention with the Pelhams should contain definite stipulations. They were especially anxious to pass a so-called place bill, for the disenfranchisement of certain classes of subordinate officials who were dependent upon the government. This proposal met with keen opposition, and the party seemed threatened with disruption. Another group, which included Pitt and Lyttelton, rejected such proposed agreements, and thus clearly showed that office, with its contingent advantages of wealth and power, was their main object, and that their championship of liberty was only a means to overthrow their opponents and to secure the popular favour. When Chesterfield and Cobham were commissioned by the party to open negotiations with Henry Pelham, the former immediately broke away from his colleague in order to secure an independent agreement with the minister. 'The damned fools,' cried Cobham in anger, 'they think of nothing but themselves.' They could not even advance the excuse that the proposed conditions were impracticable, for Pelham himself mooted the question of the place bill. They were indeed anxious to retain the existing system of corruption, in order that when they secured ministerial

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posts they might not lose the advantages which their predecessors had enjoyed. The opposition junta was thus divided into two camps. On the one side were Cobham, Waller, Dodington, and Hynde Cotton, who supported the stipulation; on the other were Chesterfield, Bedford, Gower, Pitt, and Lyttelton, who were ready to enter upon alliance unconditionally. It is surprising to find Pitt upon this side, in view of the consistent energy with which he had emphasised the principles of patriotism, but the fact is absolutely certain: we have it on the evidence of a reliable witness,[1] who was intimately connected with these transactions. We must therefore suppose Pitt to have acted under the pressure of special circumstances, and we shall soon have to consider what these may have been. Even in this case the practice of decision by vote was retained, in order to preserve the unity of the party, and that decision was given against the stipulations by a majority of five to four. Thus the opposition placed themselves unconditionally at the disposal of the Pelhams in their struggle against Carteret, it being naturally presupposed that the claims of their leaders would receive due consideration in the next distribution of offices. The date of this alliance cannot be exactly determined, but in August a division is said to have broken the opposition ranks,[2] and this is no doubt identical with the difference of opinion recounted above; hence the affair must have been concluded at the end of August or the beginning of September. A further coincidence is the fact that Pitt, as we learn from other sources,[3] visited Bath in August to take the waters, which he certainly would not have done had these important affairs remained unsettled.

The Pelhams were now assured of a support which would enable them to begin decisive action against Carteret; he, however, had not been idle, and had attempted to secure his position by forming new connections. He succeeded in winning over no less important an ally than the Prince of Wales.[4] In the voting upon the question of disbanding the Hanoverian troops on December 6, 1748, he had supported the motion

[1] Lord Marchmont.
[2] Murray's account to Bolingbroke, *Marchmont Papers*, i. 10 f.
[3] *Grenville Papers*, i. 32.
[4] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 221 ff.

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with the minority, thus voting against the government, but he had allowed some of his immediate adherents to vote on the other side. Thus Thomas Pitt of Boconnock, whom Prince Frederick continued to hold in high esteem, was to be found in the opposite camp, so that the brothers Pitt met as adversaries. In the year 1744 we find a complete change of policy on the part of the heir-apparent. He had reconciled himself to Carteret's policy, had fallen under the charm of his personality, and upon questions of domestic policy openly supported the minister during the spring.[1] It is highly probable, as has been asserted, that some arrangement had been made with the king to the effect that the prince should give his support to Carteret's position and the Hanoverian policy;[2] the king, indeed, must have placed high value upon his son's help. The prince now directed his efforts to removing the great obstacle in Carteret's way, namely Lord Orford, the most important ally of the Pelhams, whom he strove to win over to his own side. Orford, during the past winter, had come forward to Carteret's help, and he might become a permanent and valuable coadjutor if he could be persuaded to join the party. Frederick, therefore, employed the improved terms of intercourse which now prevailed between himself and the ex-minister as a basis for more permanent connection. Orford, however, was not to be moved from the policy on which he had decided; he had already, as we know, proposed a reorganisation of the party, and was entirely wedded to this project. He was not, indeed, anxious to take an active part in promoting any change against the king's wishes; on the other hand he was the less inclined to prevent such change when the other side proceeded to hold out the olive branch, and when Carteret's policy was in absolute contradiction to his own. From that date the prince's enthusiasm for the threatened minister seems gradually to have cooled, though he did not resume his former attitude of hostility. As regards Pitt, the fact that the prince had changed sides was dangerous to himself, as it was likely to cost him his post at court. It is certain that relations between the prince and Pitt, and further, between the prince and Lyttelton, were somewhat strained at this period;[3] the two friends were so entirely pledged to action against Carteret

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 228.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. 234 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 221 ff.

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that a reversal of policy on their part was utterly impossible. An attitude of neutrality such as would satisfy the prince was equally impossible for Pitt at the moment for reasons which might very soon become of practical importance. The gradual diminution of the prince's interest in Carteret seems to have helped Pitt over this crisis.

Under these circumstances the Pelhams now proceeded to decisive action.[1] On the proposal of Newcastle, Lord Hardwicke, the chancellor, drew up a memorial which subjected to a comprehensive condemnation the whole ministerial policy of Carteret; who had succeeded to the title of Earl Granville, on October 18, by the death of his mother. This memorial was handed to the king on November 1, with a strong request for the minister's dismissal. George II. obstinately refused to accede to such a demand, and made all possible efforts, with the prince's help, to save Granville. They brought forward proposals for a compromise between the two ministerial parties, but in vain. They applied to the opposition for help, but the opposition had already undertaken to support Pelham. None the less Granville remained at his post, and Newcastle began to waver and to consider the advisability of retaining his opponent in a somewhat less important position. The king, with the object of finding an honourable issue from the difficulty, resolved to leave the responsibility of decision to Lord Orford. He was recalled from Houghton to London, and readily undertook the commission in spite of a disease of the bladder, which made travelling a somewhat hazardous venture. As was only to be expected, he decided in favour of the Pelhams, and the king thus found himself obliged to sacrifice a faithful and capable servant to his enemies. Granville resigned on November 24, 1744.

In the concluding scenes of this drama Pitt played a characteristic part. Hitherto, as we know, he had followed the same course of action as his friends, and had indeed given way to their desires upon points where some divergency was certainly to be expected. Now, when it only remained to reap the fruit of his labours, and when the alliance which he had urged and secured with the object of gaining office might have been advantageously employed, he turned his back on his

[1] See Ballantyne, *Carteret*.

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friends and struck out a path of his own. This remarkable change dates from the end of October, when he learnt of the death of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, on the eighteenth of that month, who left him by will a considerable legacy and the reversion to large estates.

The fact of the monetary legacy is generally known, and is mentioned in all works upon Pitt. In a codicil dated August 11, 1744, the sum of £20,000 was left to Lord Chesterfield, and the will continues: 'I also give to William Pitt, of the Parish of St. James, within the Liberty of Westminster, Esq., the sum of £10,000 upon account of his merit in the noble defence he has made for the support of the laws of England, and to prevent the ruin of his country.'[1] The duchess, however, had not been satisfied with making this bequest. She was desirous of opening a prospect of succession to the rest of her property, so far as it was at her disposal, to these two men, Chesterfield and Pitt.

The Duchess Sarah had two grandsons by her daughter Anna, Countess of Sunderland; these were Charles Spencer, who bore the title of Duke of Marlborough after 1733, and John Spencer. This latter was a somewhat frivolous and extravagant character, but was none the less his grandmother's special favourite, and was therefore made chief heir to all those estates which were not connected with the duchy. During her life she had enjoyed a large income, and invested much capital in landed property, and the value of the inheritance was therefore enormous. Her seat at Wimbledon, which had been splendidly decorated, formed part of these estates. John Spencer had only one son, Vincent by name, and the will provided that the whole of this property, on John's death, should pass to Vincent, and if he died without heirs, one half, including Wimbledon, should go to Chesterfield, and the other half to Pitt.

Apart from this, Sarah had induced her grandson John to make a will providing that in the above circumstances his own Sunderland estates should also fall to Pitt. The young statesman thus had the reversion of a magnificent inheritance, for the estates in question, upon Lady Bolingbroke's estimate, brought in a revenue of no less than nine to ten thousand pounds. The prospects of Pitt's succession were by no means

[1] Thackeray, *Pitt*, i. 137.

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remote: the young Vincent might easily die prematurely, or leave no heir. This arrangement, which deprived the young Spencers, the sons of Duke Charles, of their lawful inheritance, was declared by Lady Bolingbroke to be the 'crowning injustice committed by that old Marlborough.' A sister of Charles and John, Lady Diana, had been married to the Duke of Bedford since 1731.

The whole question of this inheritance has hitherto received little consideration, and its importance has been left unrecognised; of Pitt's reversionary prospects no one seems to have known anything, although the printed material provides full information upon the point;[1] the circumstance has been regarded as nothing more than a piece of luck for Pitt, who chanced to attract the interest of a rich old lady, whereas it was a voluntary attempt to improve his pecuniary situation. It seems, however, that this circumstance exerted a definite influence upon his political attitude, both before and after the death of the duchess. Many a difficult problem presented by his action may be solved by a consideration of these facts.

In an unfortunately undated letter of Chesterfield to Lord Marchmont, which the editor has placed, and probably rightly, among the letters belonging to 1740-1, we find the following:[2] 'My dear Lord, I share the marks of your friendship to Mr. Pitt, looking upon everything that concerns him as personal to myself. I have not yet had an opportunity of speaking to him upon that subject, and when I have I shall break it gently, knowing his delicacy; but, in the meantime pray encourage her grace, the duchess of Marlborough, in so right and generous a resolution. You shall soon be troubled with a letter or a visit from me upon this matter.' It cannot be absolutely certain that these words refer to the bequest intended for Pitt, but it is difficult to place any other construction upon them, and thus indeed the editor has understood them. As far as we know, Pitt had had no relations with the

[1] The information is to be found in *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Eighth Rep.*, App., p. 566 f. (Letters of Lady Bolingbroke to the Countess of Denbigh); *Dictionary of National Biography*, arts. Sarah Marlborough and Charles Spencer; *Grenville Papers*, i. 131; *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Seventh Rep.*, App., p. 231 (J. de Pester to the Countess of Denbigh).

[2] *Letters of Chesterfield*, ed. Bradshaw, ii. 758. London, 1892.

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duchess; the latter, therefore, could find no other mode of expressing her high regard for Pitt than a mention of him in her will. The letter obviously speaks of some pecuniary business, and apparently of a gift of money to Pitt, as it states that his delicacy must be considered in the course of the transaction. The duchess was, moreover, seriously ill at the date to which the letter probably belongs.[1] In 1740 the doctors told her that if she did not employ their remedies of blistering, she would die. She refused these remedies, and it was therefore necessary for her at that time to think of her death and her final testamentary dispositions, upon which subject she asked the advice of members of the opposition. Lord Marchmont with three others was appointed her executor.[2] In my opinion, therefore, we can hardly be accused of jumping to conclusions if we state that the letter deals with the question of making a rich legacy to Pitt.

The question, however, now arises, How was it that the duchess had conceived this regard for Pitt? It seems to have been she who conceived the idea, in which Marchmont merely supported her. According to the expressions of the codicil, it was pure patriotism that inspired her with the idea. She was rewarding a man who had defended the liberties of England and avoided the danger of an overthrow. Duchess Sarah, however, was an avaricious, quarrelsome, and utterly selfish character, and it is difficult to suppose that these high motives could have been honestly entertained, or have decisively influenced her action; for this action the true reasons are undoubtedly to be found in personal sympathy and antipathy. To the many quarrels and lawsuits which occupied the last ten years of her life belongs a very serious difference with Sir Robert Walpole, which she took greatly to heart. She considered that Walpole had scandalously cheated her in a financial transaction between herself and the chancellor of the exchequer. To this was added another indiscretion on the part of the minister.[3] Upon the death of George I. he had refused her permission to use the royal pleasure-ground

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. Sarah Marlborough.
[2] J. de Pester to the Countess Denbigh, October 23, 1744.—*Hist. MSS. Comm., Seventh Rep.*, App., p. 231.
[3] *Letters of the Duchess of Marlborough*, p. 359 f.

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of St. James's Park, a privilege hitherto granted to her alone. She was turned out, and, what was infinitely worse, the Duchess of Buckingham was allowed to walk there undisturbed. In consequence she conceived a hatred of Walpole both intense and ineradicable, and some means of showing her dislike became absolutely necessary. Political partisanship was to her a wholly secondary matter. She was only anxious to secure the humiliation of the man who had insulted her. Hence she must have taken a lively interest in the struggles of the year 1740-1 in which Walpole was violently attacked; Chesterfield and Pitt were the most prominent leaders of these assaults in the House of Lords and the House of Commons, which they conducted in a manner in full accordance with the wishes of the duchess. Other opponents attacked him as the king's favourite, as the head of the Whigs, and as the representative of an insular policy, without manifesting any personal aversion, whereas the attacks of Pitt and Chesterfield were eminently personal; not only did they condemn his measures in the strongest terms, but they also attacked his personal uprightness and accused him of every conceivable kind of malpractice. It was in February 1740 that Pitt had given vent to the most boundless accusations, and had even declared the minister to be worthy of death, while Chesterfield had inveighed against him in a similar style. It is thus intelligible that the duchess, while considering her testamentary arrangements, conceived the idea of giving this man a share in her inheritance. This project she discussed with the youthful Lord Marchmont, whose father had been excluded from the House of Lords on account of his opposition to Walpole.[1] However, her decision had not as yet been determined; she had merely announced her intention of making a legacy to Pitt.[2] Thus Pitt became to a certain extent dependent upon the old duchess and upon those who influenced her actions, especially Chesterfield, who had secured her favour as early as the year 1714, in the course of a visit in Antwerp, where her husband then resided.[3] The amount was too large, and the political advantages of financial independence were too great, for him to adopt any other course than that of accommodating his future attitude to the wishes of his patroness and

[1] *Marchmont Papers.*
[2] *Grenville Papers*, i. 32.
[3] Upon his relations with the duchess, cp. also *Chesterfield Letters*, ii. 760.

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her friends. This connection of events cannot be demonstrated by certain evidence upon every point, but much of Pitt's behaviour, especially the obstinate ferocity with which he persecuted Walpole after his fall, thus becomes more intelligible. The fact of this persecution is indeed capable of another explanation, as I have attempted to show in the proper place, but the manner of it can only be interpreted by this business of the Marlborough inheritance. The duchess undoubtedly wished to see the fallen minister suffer in person and in purse; a mere resignation, which must, sooner or later, be the lot of every statesman, could hardly have satisfied her animosity. Thus, while other opponents slackened their pace when the object had been attained, Pitt remained one of those prepared to pursue the quarry to the death. Chesterfield was in a very similar position at the time, and as the exclusion of these two men from the new ministry was the necessary consequence of their fierce hostility to Walpole, we may perhaps venture to assert with some justification that they sacrificed their immediate prospect of office to their future hopes of inheritance.[1]

We can now understand Pitt's singular behaviour in 1744, when he joined, against his principles, the party which was anxious to throw itself unconditionally into the arms of the Pelhams, and to give up all hope of securing the demands of the patriots. This action can hardly have implied direct disobedience to the will of the duchess, for even though the Pelhams may perhaps have begun relations with her upon one occasion before Walpole's fall, they were at this time helped and supported by Lord Orford, her enemy above all others. Pitt's behaviour must have been imposed upon him by consideration for Chesterfield's views. Until he was actually possessed of the inheritance, he could not venture to break away from the earl, and was obliged to show complete unanimity with him, so that Chesterfield, as he observed in the above-mentioned letter to Marchmont, regarded everything that affected Pitt as affecting him personally, and hoped to forward his own plans by forwarding Pitt's. Any strain upon their relations was bound to become dangerous, for if Chesterfield ceased his further efforts the whole project might come to nothing. Pitt's influence could not for a moment be

[1] Cp. p. 188 above.

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compared with that of this politician, who was fourteen years older, of high social position, and far more experienced in every kind of intrigue. The fact that the codicil was not added until August 1744 is no mere coincidence;[1] it was then that the alliance between the opposition and the Pelhams had been accomplished; it was then that Pitt had fallen in with his friend's views upon this important matter.

My theory of the connection between Pitt's political attitude and the legacy of the duchess is finally confirmed by his behaviour after the duchess's decease.

Pitt, as we have already said, spent the autumn of 1744 in Bath in the hope of relieving his sufferings from the gout. The life of Bath at that period was sociable and entertaining, and its harmless cheerfulness is in excellent contrast to the customs of an earlier period.[2] The stiff conventionality and the somewhat suburban tone under which Pitt's grandmother Jane and her daughters had formerly suffered,[3] had been thrown into the background, if it had not become extinct, since Ralph Allen, a rich quarry owner, had taken a leading part in the administration of the town affairs. This man was in close friendship with Pitt, and was able to stimulate the activity of his native town in every direction. He increased the trade in stone, and the prosperity of the inhabitants in consequence. He founded a hospital for the proper treatment of invalids who came to take the waters, and thus attracted many to the town. He suppressed the nepotism prevalent in the town corporation, and thus improved the capacities of that body. His hospitality was as hearty as it was unlimited. His country seat, Prior Park, surrounded by picturesque and well-kept gardens, had been built by him not far from the town with high artistic taste, and upon its completion in 1742 it became a social centre. Guests from every class of society were invited and usually asked to stay the night, or were accompanied to their homes by link-boys from the house. In the year 1752 the brother and sister of the heir-apparent, Princess Amelia and the Duke of York, made some stay there. Of other visitors we may mention the poet

[1] *Hist. MSS. Comm., Eighth Rep.*, App., p. 566.
[2] On life in Bath, see R. E. M. Peach, *The Life and Times of Ralph Allen of Prior Park*. London, 1895.
[3] Cp. p. 55 above.

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Pope, Dean Warburton, whom Pitt afterwards made Bishop of Gloucester (in 1745 he married Gertrude Tucker, Allen's niece and heiress), the attorney-general Charles Yorke, who became lord chancellor, and Thomas Potter, a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a close friend of Pitt. His excessive intimacy with the beautiful and intellectual Mrs. Warburton gave rise to considerable gossip. Marshal Wade, the unsuccessful adversary of the Maréchal de Saxe, was a frequent guest. So too was Robert Henley, the companion of Pitt's student days, whose cheerfulness made him a general favourite. He made a romantic marriage in Bath; he paid court, out of compassion, to a rich landowner's daughter who was on the point of death, and her passionate love for him brought about an unexpected recovery. The Grenvilles also seem to have made several visits to Bath; one of the family is mentioned as present in this year. Such was the society in which Pitt passed his days while practising the cure. He usually lived with some of his acquaintances in the town, but afterwards built himself a house of his own when his means justified the expense. As we have already said, he struck up a hearty friendship with the owner of Prior Park. Allen admired his brilliant capacities, his strong character, and let no opportunity slip of rendering him any political service. He supported him in the struggle against Walpole, and Pitt's election for Bath in 1757 was due to the efforts of Allen, as we shall see.

On this occasion Pitt stayed in Bath from the beginning of October to November, though he secured no lasting relief, and his friends began to fear that he would be permanently crippled.[1] His return was only determined by the necessity of arranging for the payment of his legacy and of being present at the decision upon Carteret's fate. We find him discussing the situation with Bolingbroke, who had resumed his vigorous support of the efforts of the opposition.[2] He warmly advocated the maintenance of the alliance with the Pelhams, while Pitt threw serious difficulties in the way. His keen judgment of character immediately ascribed this change to the inheritance. 'He [Pitt] appears,' so he writes to Lord Marchmont, 'to be less reasonable upon the legacy that has been left him.' As we have no reason to assume that

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 32.

[2] *Marchmont Papers*, i. 70 ff.

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the legacy imposed any new policy upon him, we are forced to conclude that his real feelings were now manifested for the first time. Hitherto he had been forced to accommodate his attitude to that of others, to be dependent upon others; now he threw off the yoke and adopted an independent position. In conversation he declared that the Pelhams were 'weak, incapable, and insincere, and that any union with them was quite impossible. He was angry with one and another of them, and particularly with Pelham himself.' When Bolingbroke advised him to make a distinction between personal feelings and politics, and to trust to his capacity and his intellect, which would be able to reap a due reward from the connection, when he further urged that it was he and not Chesterfield or Pitt who had founded the opposition party, with the object of uniting all groups in the interest of the state, Pitt then affirmed his intention of opposing only the conduct of the war in the Hanoverian policy, and of making no promise in any other direction. Bolingbroke then very justly replied that they would never get a majority, and that everything would end in confusion. This, however, made no impression upon Pitt, who had wholly different prospects in view, which he thought his present independence would enable him to realise. He openly declared that they need only wait for some conjuncture of events, which would inaugurate a new epoch, such, for instance, as the death of the king; meanwhile they might very well go on without any definite policy. The old statesman displayed considerable anger at this intractability on the part of a far younger man, whose intellectual father he considered himself. In describing the interview to his friends, he said that he considered Pitt extremely supercilious, and that in his young days far more deference was shown to men of high reputation than he had received from Pitt, who, in spite of his capacities, was somewhat narrow-minded, with little experience of the world and of too dogmatic a temperament. This estimate of Pitt's character was naturally dictated by vexation, but it was not entirely without some substratum of truth.[1] Pitt's inheritance had certainly gone to his head. For a long time he had been fettered and restrained, and his sudden freedom, as is often noticeable in

[1] Hence it is incorrect, with Green (*William Pitt*, p. 34), to regard this as Bolingbroke's final estimate of Pitt's character.

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characters not wholly formed, made him haughty and obstinate even against, and perhaps directly against, those patrons to whom he owed a large debt of gratitude. He took pleasure in showing that he could now go his own road.

It proved equally impossible to induce Pitt to enter upon a definite connection with the other side. The prince, as we know, was openly using his influence for Carteret. He had already tried his fortune with other members of the opposition whom he counted among his adherents. Dr. Ayscough, his clerk of the closet, who married Lyttelton's sister, Anna, in the next year, had been appointed tutor to the prince's son in October at a salary of £500, upon the express condition that he should vote for Carteret; the prince had also guaranteed, under similar conditions, a yearly pension of £100 to Mr. West, a relation of Lyttelton's.[1] Lyttelton, however, remained faithful to the opposition. He now attempted to utilise Pitt's change of views, which the young politician had openly admitted to Bolingbroke, in the hope of drawing him over to his side.[2] He excused himself for his occasional irritation with Pitt's divergent opinions, explaining that a man is often more jealous of his mistress than of his wife. By this he clearly meant that Pitt was only loosely dependent upon himself in comparison with the tie that binds the king to his minister; hence if the tie between king and minister be regarded as marriage, their own connection might be considered as that of mistress and lover. Hence every difference of opinion had greatly troubled him as being likely to result in separation, which would not have been so much the case if a minister had been in question. Thus the prince assured him of his particular favour, and by way of further inducement he expressed his hopes that in the event of his succession to the crown, Pitt would prove no less faithful than before. Here again Pitt declined to make any promises, least of all when the prince was supporting an obviously hopeless cause, as in the present case. He left the house without giving any definite answer.

If we attempt to determine Pitt's theories and ideas at this moment, they must be, I think, formulated as follows: his chief desire was a change in the occupancy of the throne; such a change would forthwith remove the obstacles which prevented his entrance to state office. The prospective ruler

[1] *Marchmont Papers*, i. 63. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 73.

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had formerly shown him favour, confidence, and respect; they were divided by no fundamental differences of opinion, though their views might be divergent at times. Such a ruler he could serve in a high position without question, and he might also hope that such a ruler would sooner or later entrust him with the supreme power. If, however, George II. were to live long, his entry to office could only be made possible in opposition to the king, whose present attitude towards him was hardly likely to change. The monarch must be forced to accept his help. Some inferior office, a sinecure, or any post of the kind, which he might well have demanded with many others upon the approaching change of ministry, was by no means what he wanted; not money, but influence and power were the primary objects of his ambition. He wanted to take over the conduct of the war, to turn his military capacities and knowledge to account, and to show that he could not only talk and criticise, but that he also had a constructive policy. Hence, as soon as he was sure of his independence, he took up a position outside the limits of party. Far from simply joining them to suffer another disappointment, he permitted them to sue for his favour that he might afterwards be able to issue higher demands. He did his best to maintain friendly relations with the prince, so long as he occupied the position of heir-apparent, for thus his future was secured; but the former co-operation could not be renewed, for it would have hindered his own projects. Such action was possible for men like Richard Glover, who preferred the prince's friendship to political principles, and were satisfied with the petty advantages to be expected from the prince's favour; such action was impossible for Pitt at this stage of his development. The difference between this stage and the earlier was that he now enjoyed high prestige and a certain popularity, his services were wanted, and he was free from pecuniary anxiety. He might at any moment resign the office at court, which had hitherto bound him to the prince. We have now to see how his wishes were realised after the fall of Carteret, which, as we have said, took place on November 24, 1744.

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CHAPTER XI

THE FIRST OFFICIAL POST [1]

THE victory which the Pelhams had won over Granville was hardly fought, and by no means complete. Like Orford in former days, who now lent his help for the last time though at the point of death, Granville exerted a secret influence upon the king, with the object of resuming power the moment that the Pelhams got into difficulties. His helper was Lord Bath, who was anxious once more to play a part in politics. On the other hand the Pelhams attempted to secure themselves by basing their power upon the widest possible foundation, and forming a thoroughly broad-bottomed ministry. Tories like Dodington and Hynde Cotton found places in the ministry. On this point, however, they were opposed by the king's will. 'Although I have been forced to part with those I like,' he said, 'I will never be induced to take those who are disagreeable to me.' He was with difficulty persuaded to confirm Chesterfield's appointment as lord lieutenant of Ireland, and when Chesterfield was shortly afterwards sent to the Hague as ambassador, to secure the military help of the Dutch, the king made the inevitable leave-taking audience as short as possible. Chesterfield's reception is said to have lasted barely a minute. Lyttelton received the important post of treasurer commissary, and Cobham the commandership of his old dragoon regiment. Pitt himself made no particular effort to get into office. He wanted a place in the cabinet, and he knew perfectly well that the king would never consent to this. He therefore made no immediate application, and the generally accepted statement that he met with a second repulse on

[1] Cp. in general, Ballantyne, *Carteret*, p. 307 ff., and Mahon, *History*, iii. 196 ff.

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this occasion is erroneous.[1] He never even told the Pelhams that he wished for office; such an explanation was not given until much later, when circumstances had considerably changed. He felt himself entirely independent, and able to wait his own time, which, as he foresaw, must come sooner or later, either through the king's death or through the necessities of the government. He wished to enter office, not as an adherent, but as empowered to conduct the war or the foreign policy of the country in independence. Carteret's position was the goal of his ambition. The correctness of his calculations was shown by the fact that the Pelhams made eager efforts to win him over to their side. They had indeed no desire to see Pitt's idea realised to the full. It was not their intention to have a new Carteret upon their hands, who would treat them haughtily and decline to listen to reason, relying on the fact that he was indispensable. There was, however, no immediate danger of this, the more so as Pitt did not possess the king's favour, and had little prospect of obtaining it. And thus Pitt was for them the most likely personality to act as a counterpoise to Granville by reason of his popularity and his oratorical power, and they saw no actual danger in giving him some higher office. Hence he no doubt received a definite promise from the new ministers that they would use all their influence to secure his appointment at the most opportune moment, and Pitt accepted the alliance thus offered as the only means of obtaining power that presented itself at the time. His determination must have been largely influenced by the fact that a no less important personality than Granville was to be found in the opposite camp; if he joined Granville's side his advancement would be indefinitely postponed, whereas the Pelham party possessed no member of outstanding talent.

Such an arrangement would have been impossible for Pitt a few months before. He would have been then forced to ask for a position without delay, for this conversion implied the immediate resignation of his post at the prince's court, and would thus have deprived him of his means of sustenance.

[1] This assertion is based upon a misunderstanding of the connection between these events, and is not supported by any evidence. The situation has been regarded as analogous to that of 1742. The correct view can only be derived from the consideration of Pitt's change of attitude begun in November 1744.

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Now that he was in possession of considerable property, he was able to regard this consequence undismayed, without becoming dependent elsewhere. We have no details of his resignation of his post at court. It must, however, have taken place, for the prince, who had formerly been wavering, had now gone entirely over to Granville's side, and was supporting that Hanoverian policy which Pitt strongly opposed. It was impossible for him to continue in so contradictory an environment, and Pitt therefore resigned his position, while his brother, Thomas Pitt of Boconnock, remained faithful to the prince's cause. There is no need, however, to suppose that his retirement from his post, which he had held for eight years, was accompanied by any bitterness of spirit; Pitt was bound to remain upon good terms with his future sovereign, upon whom he continued to set great hopes.[1] Lyttelton naturally gave in his resignation at the same time, for he, as we have said, had accepted high state office.

The foreign policy of the country was now directed by the Duke of Newcastle, who was responsible for the southern division, and by Lord Harrington, who undertook the northern division. It is difficult to form a just estimate of Newcastle's character. Current opinions upon him are, on the whole, very unfavourable, and he is constantly represented as a ridiculous figure and a politician devoid of all capacity; such a view can hardly correspond with the facts, for the system of corruption in England had not yet reached such a pitch as to enable an utterly incompetent man to retain high office for ten years at a time. He certainly was not a dominant personality, and was equally certainly in possession of many ridiculous weaknesses, such as his constant anxiety for his personal health, and the effeminacy which such anxiety produced. He was horrified by the inconveniences of travel, and when upon one

[1] The report of the Prussian ambassador André, of February 21, March 4, 1746, contains a valuable reference to this proceeding, upon which all other sources of information are silent. 'Ce furent aussi les mêmes motifs ci-dessus [Pitt's opposition to the Hanoverian policy] qui portèrent il y a déjà deux ans le Prince de Galles à le congédier de son service, bien que ce Prince lui ait toujours depuis conservé sa bienveillance à cause de ses belles qualités du cœur et de l'esprit.' Thus a year and a half later Pitt was regarded as the political opponent of the prince, though in enjoyment of his esteem. The influence which he had formerly exerted upon the prince had not as yet vanished.

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occasion he was forced to decide upon an expedition to the Continent, his preparations and precautions were extravagant in the extreme. The deficiencies of his education often led him into difficulties, and the most incredible stories are told upon these points. He is said upon one occasion to have looked for Jamaica in the Mediterranean, and to have been under the impression that New England was an island, but it is possible that in the first instance he was confusing two names, as may happen to the best informed of men, and as regards the second point, we must not judge him from our own level, for he had not, as we have, accurate maps of the most distant countries. Mistakes of this kind, which his adversaries naturally pounced upon and passed from mouth to mouth, are no evidence of incapacity for statesmanship. His real deficiencies were his weakness and lack of decision. He was a pessimist, always grumbling and groaning; every unfavourable incident was for him the starting-point of appalling dangers, and he was never able to decide upon any vigorous course of action. Hence he was often led to employ half-measures and means that were either pettifogging or contemptible. There was a treacherous, underhand, and perfidious strain in his character, strengthened by his continual efforts to shift responsibility from his own shoulders to those of others. This tendency has already been obvious in his dealings with Walpole and Carteret.

Newcastle's chief ambition was to gain and to secure power. This in itself is no contemptible desire for a statesman who is capable of government and feels himself equal to the task; government, however, was not Newcastle's chief object, though he could not do without it; extensive patronage was really his ambition. He wanted to see everybody dependent upon himself, to have the power of rewarding his friends and punishing his enemies, and for this purpose he employed numerous paid offices, sinecures, and other favours of the kind, which ministers had at their disposal. A position which did not imply the full disposal of these matters had no attractions for him; indeed, he would have been quite ready to sacrifice his prospects of governing if he could save his power of patronage. If it be asked how so ordinary a talent succeeded in rising to power, the answer is that we have here the results of the plutocratic system in their purest or impurest form. The

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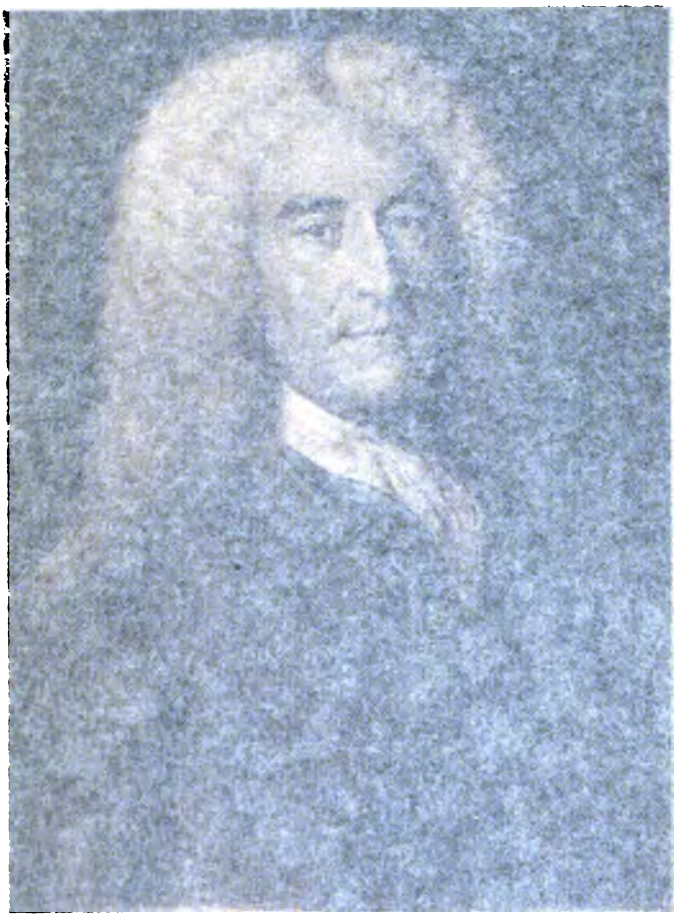

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Duke of Newcastle.

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duke was an unusually rich landowner, with a band of constituents at his beck and call. He had also succeeded in securing a large number of adherents among electors and members whose interests were strictly conjoined with his own. Thus, like a gigantic spider, he sat in the midst of a large and complicated web composed of a thousand different relations, political, economic, and ecclesiastical, and these in their totality were a very considerable power, and when circumstances were not too unfavourable, might become a decisive power in Parliament. The maintenance of this organisation, by means of influence and bribery exerted upon individuals, was a speciality of the duke's. He was always accurately informed of the prospects of success for any proposal. Before the voting day he arranged the members of each House in lists, labelled 'yes,' 'no,' and 'doubtful,' with the object of applying the leverage of promise or payment to the right spot. His great wealth enabled him to continue this system, but he must have sacrificed to it the greater portion of his property.

The duke's powers of administration were by no means despicable, though he was far from being a creative genius. He was a master of routine, and possessed great powers of application. It must be admitted that he took real trouble to gain a personal grasp of business detail, and did not merely lend his distinguished name to transactions of which he knew nothing, while his unusually long experience made him superior to more capable men in the ordinary conduct of business. The extent of his correspondence, preserved in hundreds of folios in the British Museum, is truly astonishing. In the conduct of foreign policy he showed great insight and experience; every complication was clear to his mind, and he was able to calculate and to avail himself of every possible chance. He only made mistakes when he pursued other interests than those of the state, for instance when he worked for his own advantage and his own aggrandisement, as he did under Walpole and Carteret, or when he was overcome by fear. In other respects he showed great power of appreciating points of importance and necessity, especially on the great problems of continental policy. But this power of insight was unable to cope with a difficult situation, as it was not supported by capacity for energetic action.

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Such was the man to whom England's destiny was more and more exclusively committed during these critical periods. His coadjutor was William Stanhope, Lord Harrington, a man between fifty and sixty years of age, of wide military and diplomatic experience. He had seen service as an ambassador in Turin and Madrid and at the Congress of Soissons, while in 1730 he had entered the House of Lords as Baron Harrington. Under Walpole's ministry he was secretary of state for the north and a member of the Pelham party, which was working against the minister. He also favoured the king's Hanoverian policy. This latter circumstance, added to his capacity, made him a greater favourite with the king than other ministers, notwithstanding his close connection with the Pelhams; in entrusting him once more with the office of secretary of state, and marking him out for special favour, the king doubtless intended to place him ultimately in Carteret's position, an attempt which was not destined to succeed.

The two secretaries of state should now have obviously regarded as their chief task the business of guiding English policy into new and better paths, away from the perverse courses followed by Granville, which had so often aroused the general anger. No attempt of the kind, however, was proposed, and once again it became obvious that opposition to a policy had been inspired by opposition to a person. With the exception of a few formal changes, the ministry continued to build upon Granville's foundations, and the change of leadership could hardly have been perceptible to an uninformed spectator. Pitt had argued with great skill that it would be cheaper to let Maria Theresa enlist her own mercenaries and to pay subsidies directly to her. This proposal was now followed, and we may observe the results. The Hanoverian troops were indeed reduced to half their number, but the subsidies to the queen were increased by some £200,000, an amount practically equal to the previous expense. But, in addition to this, reinforcements of 7000 men were added to the English army in Flanders, so that the exchequer was ultimately burdened more heavily than before. In no long time the electoral troops were again employed upon the old conditions and in increased numbers. The conduct of the war underwent no material change, and a cry of amazement soon went up that the ministers who had expelled Granville were merely con-

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tinuing his policy, whereupon Newcastle wrote a word of warning to his brother Pelham :[1] 'We must not, because we seem to be in, forget all we said to keep Lord Granville out.' It was at this moment that Pitt rendered the ministers the help he had promised, and abandoned opposition for the first time in his life.[2]

On January 23, 1745, Sir William Young moved that the necessary money should be voted for the army in Flanders, which consisted of 28,000 troops. There was no prospect of a refusal, but the opportunity was to be used for showing the power of the government to the best advantage, and for silencing the voices of those who reproached the ministers with inconsistency. Pitt then made a highly dramatic appearance. His stay in Bath had given him little benefit, and he was still suffering from the gout, though it may be doubted whether his sufferings were as serious as he asserted. In any case he appeared wrapped in bandages, supported upon crutches, and provided with the necessaries of an invalid, and thus aroused the general attention. Then he raised his powerful voice and pointed to his bandaged limbs as evidence of the importance of a debate which would have brought him to the spot even upon the last day of his life. No doubt he made an impression, but it was an ill-considered proceeding, for any unprejudiced observer must have recognised its essentially theatrical nature. An invalid who was really suffering would have allowed his audience to draw their own conclusions from his appearance, and would not have called their attention to his condition of weakness, or in any case only by some hint or allusion. But Pitt's behaviour in the course of the speech, in which he rose to his full height and gesticulated vigorously, can hardly have tended to strengthen the belief in his sufferings, so that he was forced to confirm the impression by outward show and by strong reference to his malady.[3]

This effective entry served only as the setting to a speech in which the whole of his oratorical and intellectual powers were

[1] Ballantyne, *Carteret*, p. 313. [2] Thackeray, *Pitt*, i. 138 ff.

[3] Of course we do not assert that Pitt's sufferings were fictitious, but that he deliberately made a show of them, instead of attempting to conceal their existence. Malicious gossip went further, and asserted that his gout was often obliging enough to appear only when it was wanted: it is, however, obvious from his correspondence that he was sorely troubled by his malady at this time. Cp. *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 201.

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devoted to secure the desired object. He again attempted to represent Carteret's policy in the gloomiest possible light, in order to display the brilliance of the new ministry by force of contrast. It was no easy task to define the difference between the former and the present policy, and a keen examination could not have failed to lay bare the emptiness of his arguments; but the dexterity with which they were formulated, and the glow of conviction by which they seemed inspired, secured for them the recognition of the majority. Pitt gave the impression that even his present change of front had been dictated only by fidelity to his old principles. As the measures of the former and of the present government were practically identical, a fact which even he could not deny, he proceeded to attribute imaginary objects to Carteret. He asserted that Carteret had been anxious to conquer French territory for the Queen of Hungary, by way of compensation for the loss of Silesia, and that only the interference of Pelham had prevented the prosecution of these plans, which was greatly to Pelham's credit. He was thus able to surround with a halo of patriotism that interference with the delicate balance of Carteret's diplomacy which had been alike detrimental and despicable. He then assumed that the new ministers were inspired by the noble desire of making a good and sensible peace, which cast a wholly different light upon their measures, though these in outward character were identical with Carteret's. This was naturally a wholly arbitrary distinction; both governments were carrying on war in alliance with Austria, and both were doing their utmost to bring the war to a favourable conclusion. The advantages which a peace would bring, either to England or to her allies, would entirely depend upon the negotiations. Carteret had no more intention than Pelham of sacrificing in any way the interests of his country; it may be that either minister had conceived a different method of settling disputed points, but this cannot be called difference of policy, for the decision did not lie with them, but with the result of the war and with the influence of that result upon the negotiations. Pitt made special reference to the recent agreement with Holland, with the object of praising the work of his friend Chesterfield at the Hague, which had indeed ended successfully. But Carteret had placed equally great value upon this alliance, the difference being

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that he had not always succeeded in rousing the Dutch magnates to action. Pitt thus placed a series of apparent differences before his audience, and at every point he made he turned contemptuously to the previous speaker, Sir R. Newdigate, asking 'if this could be called an old measure from a new ministry?' He asserted that the Pelham ministry brought with it the dawn of a new and better era.

The effect of the speech was decisive, though its power cannot be recognised in the report that has come down to us. The opposition, which had never been very strong, was silenced, and the motion was carried with only one dissentient voice, a very exceptional occurrence. It must, however, be remembered that both opposition and government had previously recognised that the help of the Dutch contingent was indispensable, and that no one would now care to expose himself to the suspicion of anti-nationalism, especially after so powerful a speech.

The ministry was now left in peace, at any rate as far as Parliament was concerned; from the lack of effective opposition this Parliament was known as the 'Peaceful Parliament.' The Pelhams were able to carry out their diplomatic and military plans without hindrance, and suffered no lack of money. Carteret had been continually opposed on account of his subsidies to foreign princes, but the present ministry was able, without any objection, greatly to extend the system of subsidies, into which they brought Saxony, thus founding the quadruple alliance of England, Holland, Austria, and Saxony. Notwithstanding all these advantages, they were soon heavily burdened with anxiety, for two reasons. The king remained hostile to them, and the course of the war was by no means successful.

George II., after the loss of his old confidant, Lord Orford, who died in March, continued faithful to Granville, and never forgave the Pelhams for obliging the Crown to give way to their will. He asserted that he had been cheated by Newcastle, hardly ever spoke to the brothers except upon business matters, and treated them so contemptuously that the duke declared in May that he had no desire to spend a second parliamentary session in this manner. Notwithstanding the war, the king went to Hanover with Harrington, and did not return until September, when he again reproached the ministers

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for their incompetence, and with numerous damaging facts that had been hushed up in Parliament, especially the dependence of their policy upon that of Granville. He called Henry Pelham a mere imitator of other men's policies.

The course of events now provided full material for strong criticism, although the king was obliged to moderate his tone, as the action of his own son was to a large extent in question. Upon this occasion the supreme command in Flanders had been entrusted to the Duke of Cumberland, the king's second son, who was a combative and brave soldier, but endowed with no special talent. The army under his command amounted to 28,000 English troops and a somewhat smaller number of Dutch, some 50,000 men altogether. The Maréchal de Saxe opposed them with 76,000 men, and began the campaign by besieging the fortress of Tournay. Cumberland's attempt to relieve the fortress ended in a battle, in which the allies tried to force the strong position held by the French at Fontenoy on May 11. The battle ended with a victory for the French, and in the course of the summer town after town fell into the maréchal's hands. Tournay, Ghent, Bruges, with many other towns, and even Ostend, were obliged to open their gates, and only the beginning of winter checked the steady advance of the French. On the other hand, King Frederick of Prussia had repaired the unfortunate beginning of the campaign of 1744, and had won a series of victories. George II. and Harrington attempted to mediate between the conflicting powers, but not until the battle of Kesselsdorf at Christmas 1745 were they able to induce the powers to agree to peace upon the basis of the *status quo ante*. Here again the allies had not been successful, nor had they any security of peace for the future. The tension between the German powers, which proved so great an obstacle to English efforts, remained undiminished. In a word, the glow of dawn which Pitt had enthusiastically depicted was displayed in somewhat terrifying colours.

At this moment a new danger appeared, for which the public was entirely unprepared. It was a danger against which Walpole had issued many warnings, though its existence had been previously denied by the opposition and by Pitt. The young Charles Edward, son of the Pretender, James III., who was then in Rome, unfurled the banner of the Stuarts in

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Scotland. His was a desperate venture, which derived its sole prospect of permanent success from the dilatory and apathetic nature of the English government, and was defeated only by the bad discipline of the Scots and the lack of support from France. Upon his own initiative, without the support or knowledge of the French court, the bold prince set sail from St. Nazaire in July 1745, upon a French ship of war, of which he had cunningly possessed himself, and made a landing in Inverness. There he found some adherents, whose numbers rapidly increased after some small initial successes, and on September 17 he was able to march into Edinburgh at the head of a considerable army, shortly afterwards defeating and scattering the royal troops which had advanced to meet him at Prestonpans. Even this did not arouse England to vigorous action. The storm which threatened English soil was turned to account, as were the events upon the Continent, for purposes of party intrigue. Granville attempted to minimise the importance of the revolt, hoping that the government would delay the organisation of resistance, and that the resulting catastrophe would pave the way for his return to power. Newcastle, on the other hand, failed to perceive Granville's objects, and rejoiced over every rebel success as giving the lie to his assertions. Thus in October the prince was able to begin his march into England, with the object of conquering for his father the throne to which he laid claim. The old Marshal Wade was unable to stop his progress, and on December 4 he reached Derby, in the very heart of England. There was a great panic in the capital, as no defensive measures had been completed, and the proposed armies had not been concentrated. The king made preparations for flight, and the Duke of Newcastle is said to have shut himself up for twenty-four hours and pondered the advisability of joining the Stuarts, although this is a story open to suspicion. However, the dreaded blow did not fall. In the prince's army the idea gained ground that further advance would end in falling into a trap. It was supposed that the king's armies were already complete and ready to strike. The Scottish nobles, therefore, obliged their leader to return before any battle was fought, and the retreat to Scotland began on December 6. The only opportunity of restoring the Stuart dynasty had been lost. Fortune again favoured the prince

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in his own country: Wade's army had been sent in pursuit, under the command of Henry Hawley, and was defeated at Falkirk on January 17, a battle in which the utter rout of the English was only prevented by the cavalry of Colonel Ligonier and by Cobham's brave dragoons, to which Pitt had formerly belonged. The Duke of Cumberland was then immediately summoned, and the Pretender's successes came to an end.

Though Pitt was unable to share in the exploit of his regiment, an attempt had been made to secure his participation in these events in another direction. Immediately after the king's return from Hanover, when the first news of disaster came from Scotland, Lord Cobham, who was a member of the regency provided for the king's absence, and had recently been appointed field-marshal, felt himself impelled to approach the Duke of Newcastle, to force him to confer some definite mark of favour upon Pitt. Pitt was to be proposed to the king for the secretaryship of war.[1] It was somewhat significant that such a man as Cobham should propose for this high office, at such a critical time, his former cornet of horse, whose military experience had been but scanty. He must have placed high confidence in the young man's powers of organisation and knowledge of military affairs. This, however, was not his primary motive. Pitt had withdrawn from his patronage by his recent action upon Carteret's fall, had declined office, and had struck out a line of his own. This action had wounded the old gentleman's feelings, the more so as his nephew George had been led to take a similar course.[2] The number of his adherents was thus weakened and his own influence diminished. He was therefore anxious to seize the first opportunity of restoring the old relationship, to re-appear as Pitt's patron, and thus to bring him back to his own side. The attempt was a complete failure, either because Pitt's intentions were better known to Newcastle, or because, as he said, he really could not venture to present such a request to the king. George II. at that moment was far from satisfied with his ministers, when he found so unsatisfactory a condition of affairs upon his return from Hanover. In any case the project was put off. On the other hand, Lord Bath seized the opportunity of bringing Cobham and Pitt to his own party. He promised them office if they were ready to

[1] Almon, *Anecdotes*, i. 145 ff. [2] *Grenville Papers*, i. 424.

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help in the formation of a new cabinet, but Cobham could not forget his attitude upon Walpole's fall, and declined.

During these conflicting intrigues Parliament met, and Pitt again found an opportunity of showing himself a capable representative of the interests of the ministry. The opposition was attempting to add an amendment to the address of thanks to the throne, begging the king to take measures to prevent the exercise of illegal influence upon parliamentary elections.[1] This was a proposal which Pitt would formerly have supported at all costs, for it was directed against the corruption which he had zealously opposed. Now it was his business to oppose the motion without permitting the suspicion that his own views had changed. For this purpose the desperate position of the country provided the best material. He took the opposition to task on the assumption that they proposed either to distract the government from the immediate and urgent task before them, and so to increase the existing danger, or to cast odium upon the ministers in case the proposal should be rejected. These alternatives he strove to prevent by proving that the present time was not the moment for measures of this nature, whatever their intrinsic importance. 'Is it now,' he cried, 'a time to sit contriving bills to guard our liberties from corruption, when that very liberty, when everything else that is dear to us, are in danger of being wrested from us by arms? When thieves have burst into the mansion, the fool, only, would plan out methods to prevent the frauds of his servants.' He then asserted that this action could only be interpreted upon the assumption that the opposition were anxious to facilitate the enemy's task of surprising the country, a thought which his knowledge of the proposer naturally prevented him from sharing. He here used the old trick of arousing suspicion in his audience by disclaiming any suspicion. The amendment was rejected.

Pitt's next appearance was concerned with a somewhat despicable business, which he had formerly opposed and stigmatised, and now proceeded to support with no less zeal.[2] At the outset of the rebellion, in view of the want of home troops, fourteen lords proposed to raise each of them a regiment, two of cavalry and twelve of infantry, expressly to meet this occasion. This patriotic offer soon developed into

[1] Thackeray, i. 142 f.

[2] *Quarterly Review*, lvi. 204.

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an underhand means of money-making; the expenses were to be borne by the state, while the colonels, the above-mentioned lords, gave officers' commissions to their relatives and clients and demanded that they should be confirmed in the possession of these temporary ranks and titles. The proposal excited great opposition among the regular officers upon active service, especially when it was observed that only a small proportion of the proposed forces had been actually raised. The king was undecided, and in the ministry some voices were raised against the measure, but Pitt was induced to undertake the defence of the project out of consideration for the high position of the persons interested. His speech upon the main question, whether the regiments were to be raised, has not been preserved, though we possess the speech in which he opposed the proposition to refuse permanent rank to the new officers.[1] Here Pitt showed that even he could neglect his patriotism for petty and obviously despicable affairs of this nature. He represented the action of his opponents as casting a slur upon the fidelity of loyal men, as an attack upon loyalty, which would be bound to raise doubts upon the purity of the proposers' motives, a line of argument similar to that which he had used upon the amendment to the address. He also succeeded in representing the proposal in the light of an insult to the king, as aiming in a certain degree at nullifying his powers of government by placing a time limit to his appointments. He asserted that the motion, if carried, might lead to the assumption that there was a dissension between king and Parliament. Here again Pitt attained his object, and the motion was rejected.

Negotiations for Pitt's entry to the government were not resumed until the beginning of January, shortly before the defeat of the king's forces at Falkirk. On this occasion Pitt himself opened the question. Cobham had already persuaded him to take this step, as his own representations had been so badly received by Newcastle. Shortly before the meeting of Parliament, after Christmas, Pitt made his way to the Duke of Bedford, asked for information upon the foreign policy of the ministry, and expressed his readiness to enter the government. As soon as Newcastle heard this he went to Cobham, discussed the matter with him, and came to an agreement

[1] Thackeray, i. 143.

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upon the condition that Pitt should receive the post of secretary of war, and that his other Whig friends should be provided with offices. Such is the account given by the duke to Chesterfield.[1] It must, however, have cost him a struggle, as indeed is obvious from his weeks of hesitation, to bring the matter before the king; in the first place he was aware of the king's dislikes, and further, he and his adherents could not suppress a certain apprehension of Pitt. They would have preferred to deal with some moderate talent rather than with so strong and rising a character, of whom it might reasonably be understood that he would seize power for himself if it were not voluntarily offered to him.[2] The duke would have preferred, if it had been possible, to keep Pitt in play with promises, and to settle the unfortunate war without his help.

Unfortunately the decision could not be postponed; at this critical moment Pitt's defection would have endangered the whole of the governmental system. The motley forces of the opposition had reconcentrated, and were strengthened by the king's dislike of the Pelhams and by the recent military disasters. So on Wednesday 5th or 16th of February[3] the duke ventured to propose a number of changes to the king, including Pitt's appointment as secretary of war.[4] The king examined the list readily, but when he came across Pitt's name he immediately declined the whole proposal. Newcastle ventured to urge that he had made an engagement with Cobham on the subject, to which George angrily replied, 'Then you will have to break your engagement.' At first it was supposed that the king had been merely carried away by his resentment, and would soon change his mind; the ministers therefore waited until Sunday. Meanwhile Lord Bath had exerted all his influence to strengthen the king in the attitude he had adopted.[5] He earnestly advised Pitt's rejection, and left George II. with the idea that he felt himself strong enough to carry on the

[1] Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, i. 292 f.

[2] Ernest, *Memoirs*, p. 290. Chesterfield to Newcastle, February 27, 1746: 'Your adherents were afraid only of Pitt's talents and of his friends, well knowing that they would either receive or take the conduct of affairs from your hands, if they joined your side.'

[3] The precise dates of these events are taken from the reports of the Prussian embassy.

[4] Almon, *Anecdotes*, i. 147 f.

[5] Glover, p. 28; Mahon, iii. 310.

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government in opposition to the Pelhams. In consequence the king maintained his refusal.

The opposite party also prepared for battle, for they could not abandon their demands without dangerous consequences. On Sunday, February 9, the Duke of Newcastle met Cobham at Lord Harrington's house, explained the intention of the cabinet to retire, and asked in his precise manner, 'Will Lord Cobham and his friends adhere to us, the Pelhams, in and out of the cabinet, if we engage never to negotiate with the court without including Lord Cobham and all his friends?' Cobham heartily agreed to this welcome proposal; the Pelhams now perceived that they were secured from overthrow both on this side and among their own party-members, and felt themselves strong enough to force a fulfilment of their proposals from the king.[1] Parliamentary influence and parliamentary capacity had been united in a solid body to which no other power could act as counterpoise. On Sunday evening the ministers again presented themselves to the king, to secure the accomplishment of their wishes under the pretext of acting for the state interest. The king declined to yield, and they, therefore, resolved to resign their posts.

Different judgments have been passed upon this step, for the most part unfavourable. The Prussian ambassador, Andrié, asserts that all who were free from party bias loudly praised the behaviour of the ministers;[2] however, the ambassador was prejudiced in favour of the Pelhams and against Granville, as he expected the former to support Prussian interests, so that his evidence can hardly be regarded as weighty. It must also have been difficult for him to distinguish between the secret adherents of the Pelhams, who were naturally loud in their praises, and independent critics. Generally the ministers have at all times been severely criticised for using the needs of the state as a means to make the king feel their power, and for declining to perform their duty at a critical moment in order to secure the accomplishment of less important matters. Indeed, the fact that the whole cabinet suddenly resigned on account of a personal difference with the king does not make a very favourable impression. Those most to blame were Pitt and his friends,

[1] Almon, *Anecdotes*, i. 148 f.
[2] Report of February 11 or 22, 1746.—Berlin Archives.

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who were anxious to use a favourable opportunity. Newcastle and his followers would never have consented to the step, even if they had thought the struggle inevitable sooner or later, had it not been for their fear of Pitt's opposition, which would have brought them into difficulties similar to those which had once beset Walpole and Carteret. They could not reasonably be asked to abandon the task of government to their opponents by voluntary resignation. They would hardly have aroused the king's anger and the national indignation to such an extent for merely selfish motives, when the security of the ministry was not at stake. Nor could it be supposed that their apprehension of Pitt was unfounded, or that patriotism would have obliged him to continue his support of the governmental policy. He was so exceedingly clever in the execution of a change of front that upon this occasion he would not have hesitated to discover anything but mismanagement, where he had formerly found nothing to blame. He had repeatedly proved that it was possible to appear a zealous champion of the state even in the act of inflicting damage upon the state interests.

So on Monday, February 10, the resignations began with the retirement of the man to whom the king had shown most favour and confidence, Lord Harrington. He is said to have flung down the seals before the angry monarch in a most unseemly manner,[1] a fact which conceivably brought down upon him the whole of the king's displeasure. Newcastle followed on the same day. George thought himself master of the situation, and entrusted the vacant offices without further discussion to Granville and Bath, for whose return to office he was still anxious. He considered that the war would now take a turn for the better. Then the other ministers appeared one after the other, led by Henry Pelham, to lay their credentials at the king's feet. Granville's cause, however, was by no means lost. He might have ventured to defy his opponents, and to grasp the reins of power, favoured by the unpopularity which the late ministers were bound to incur in consequence of their behaviour. 'A broad patriotic basis' and 'emancipation of the king' were his watchwords.[2] A successful conduct of the war would perhaps have pro-

[1] *Marchmont Papers*, i. 182: related by Chesterfield to Marchmont.
[2] Almon, *Anecdotes*, i. 147.

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vided him with the necessary support. At that moment, however, contrary to all expectations, the indecision of Lord Bath destroyed his prospects. Recognising that he could expect no majority in the House of Commons, he gave in his resignation to the king early on Wednesday 12, bringing others with him. While the houses of Newcastle and Pelham were crowded with callers offering congratulations, and expressing their pleasure at this brilliant success, the king found himself again obliged to take back the portfolios and seals.[1] Furious and desperate, he finally shut himself in his room, and declined to see anybody. He then sent for the military paymaster, Winnington, who enjoyed much of his confidence, hoping to bring about a compromise with the former ministers through his means. The king was forced to promise complete liberty of action to his official advisers, no opposition to their measures, and a state office for Pitt. When all this had been arranged Granville returned the seals of office, which he had held for three days, on February 14, to the king.

It cannot be said that the Pelhams had used their victory to the uttermost. They had been satisfied with demonstrating the impregnable nature of their position and providing for the claims of the only man who could be dangerous to them, William Pitt. Apart from this they seemed desirous to put as little pressure as possible upon the king and to win his favour, a tendency which is obvious throughout their administration, and especially in their handling of the Hanoverian question. They did not even succeed in securing for Pitt the post which he had desired. They had proposed that Sir William Yonge, the previous secretary of war, should resume office, and that Pitt should succeed him when the moment came, that is to say, when another place had been found for Yonge. The king, however, obstinately declined to agree, and when he could withdraw no further, he threatened to treat Pitt rudely, and to refuse him a reception. 'The fellow,' he is said to have exclaimed, 'shall never enter my cabinet.' Pitt was anxious, in any case, to appear as though called to office by the king, and to conceal the actual pressure which he had exerted; he therefore said that he would yield to the monarch's will and renounce his claims.[2] It would be utterly

[1] Berlin Archives. [2] Green, p. 39; Coxe, i. 292; *Marchmont Papers*, i. 171 f.

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false to regard this as an expression of modesty or of devotion to the Crown, though he was fully capable of reverence for the monarch as such. The fact was, that the offer made to him was insufficient. What he required from the Pelhams was not only office, but also a polite reception from the king, which would guarantee approval of all his official actions. If he could not have this he determined to retain his freedom. The government might then be certain of sharp criticism from his side. Cobham, who knew nothing of the ultimate interests of his former client, and who was only anxious to fulfil the compact he had made with Newcastle, and to provide remunerative posts for his adherents, was naturally vexed at this disturbance of his plans, and poured his wrath upon the cause of it. He declared Pitt to be a cross-grained fellow to whom he would give no further consideration.[1] Yet in some way unity must be secured; it was dangerous to repeat the process of resignation, for the opposition war-cry 'emancipation of the king' was but too loudly echoed by the public, and the whole system might be overturned by a desperate effort on the part of the monarch, who had an ever-ready and determined helper in the person of Granville.[2] Thus, as Pitt was urged by his friends, so the king was entreated by his ministers not to carry matters to extremes. The king was specially influenced by Horace Walpole the elder, with whom Pitt had been in sharp opposition at one time, and who could not therefore be accused of partiality to him. In the memorial read to the king on February 28 he cleverly recommended that Pitt should be taken into the government. He fully admitted the inadmissibility of Pitt's previous behaviour,[3] but he demonstrated from the actual situation the necessity of winning over the Cobham group, and also the danger that the inevitable rise of other influences (he did not mention Granville) would produce, in view of the prevailing dislike to those influences both at home and

[1] *Marchmont Papers*, i. 176. G. Grenville in his sketches of 1762 places the opening of a breach between Pitt and Cobham in this year.—*Grenville Papers*, i. 424.

[2] Glover, p. 31: 'Granville . . . boldly counselled the king to summon the Commons, and declare from the throne to them and the House of Lords what usage he received from all his servants in the midst of a rebellion.'

[3] See William Coxe, *Memoirs of Horatio, Lord Walpole*, p. 138 ff. London, 1808.

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abroad. This well-meant advice seems to have been decisive. Both parties agreed to a compromise which guaranteed the continuance of the cabinet. As Pitt could have no office which carried a cabinet seat, he was at least to be secured the possession of a lucrative post, and his patrons therefore gave him the remunerative position of vice-treasurer and military paymaster for Ireland. No doubt the prospect of higher office was held before him should an opportunity occur.

The king regarded this arrangement as a personal defeat, and when the object of his animosity left the opposition, and appeared for the first time to kiss hands in his audience-chamber, tears of anger stood in his eyes.[1] There was general expectation that Pitt would be equally dissatisfied. Chesterfield, writing to Newcastle on February 27,[2] observed that they would have nothing more to fear from the Tories now that Pitt was in office, but that Pitt himself would not rest until he had become secretary of war. These fears, however, were not realised. After accepting the compromise, Pitt was careful not to endanger what he had won, by the introduction of fresh misunderstandings. He had indeed every reason for attempting to soften the king's displeasure.

His entry upon office has also a certain importance for English history as a whole, apart from its influence upon this special period. It is not the kind of importance usually attached to this event,[3] when it is asserted that Pitt was the first to force his way into the oligarchical clique by his own capacities and with the support of popular favour, so that his action in breaking into this charmed circle marks the starting-point of a new development. Such a judgment is based upon a wholly erroneous view of his career. High connections and alliances largely contributed to his promotion; had he not been favoured by Chesterfield and Cobham, had not Lyttelton, Grenville, and others remained faithful to him, and had he not enjoyed, upon the whole, the favour of the prince, the Pelhams would have troubled themselves little about his career, and have apprehended little result from his opposition. Moreover, the favour of the nation was by no means so decisively upon his side as to compel any special respect from

[1] This is the story of Mrs. Waller, who was present.—Glover, p. 32.
[2] Ernest, *Memoirs of Chesterfield*, p. 290.
[3] Green, *Pitt*, p. 39 f.

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those in power. He received, indeed, some general applause upon such occasions as his dismissal from the service and his vigorous attack upon Walpole, but public opinion was far from approving his behaviour in other transactions. It is hardly to be supposed that his brilliant powers of parliamentary argument were able to save him from the popular reputation of a political weathercock. Moreover, it was not an extraordinary event for a capable parliamentary debater to be taken into the government, even if he possessed no body of adherents and had no parliamentary seats at his command. Every cabinet could find a use for competent men who would undertake the difficult tasks which more influential personalities were not always able to perform. Men thus summoned by the ruling powers were unable to carry on a policy independently of their patrons; such action was impossible, and Pitt's conduct of office is no exception to the rule. It was a proceeding which could never occur except in those rare cases when the help of an individual was temporarily indispensable, and when no other could perform his duties, and at a later period we shall find Pitt in this exceptional position.

The importance of Pitt's appointment at this moment was of a wholly different nature. It implied that the royal power had sunk to the lowest depths, for the king had been forced by the oligarchy to confer office upon a politician with whom he was absolutely out of sympathy. He had often been obliged to confirm appointments from the opposition ranks, but these had always been nothing more than enemies of the prime minister, and not men to whom he had a personal objection. They, like his ministers, had taken pains to secure his favour, and even to supplant his ministers. Carteret and Pulteney had thus acted against Walpole, and, at a later period, against the Pelhams; they avoided everything which might hurt the king's personal feelings. Pitt's case was entirely different. For a long period he had looked to secure his promotion through the heir-apparent, in opposition to the king, and had lent his support to the hostile action of the prince. He had attempted not only to drive Walpole, the monarch's friend, out of office, but also to secure his personal punishment, to serve the purposes, as we suppose, of an old lady with legacies to leave; he had not hesitated to denounce the king's favourite plans, and the concessions and frequent

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visits which he had made to his own province. It was a deep humiliation for George II. to be obliged to entrust a high office to this man, and one that he felt severely. He realised that a certain group of Whigs, who had played a principal part in the work of founding his dynasty, had now grown too strong for him, and this by means of that system of corruption whereby his own favourites had formerly succeeded in maintaining their positions. The behaviour of Harrington and Bath in this last affair gave him ground for suspecting that the oligarchy was generally regarded as of more importance than himself, and that his own wishes were no longer considered as decisive. The ground of suspicion was to be found in the dangerous character which the rebellion had been able to assume. On the one hand the inward weakness of a new dynasty, and its utter dependence upon the Whigs, was reaffirmed, and on the other hand he had been forced to yield to a pressure which prevented him from excluding capable politicians on grounds of personal antipathy. This so-called subjugation of the Crown was many times repeated, usually under the pressure of outward necessity, while the monarchs continued their zealous efforts to prevent the repetition of such events by more firmly establishing their power.

The Irish office which was given to Pitt on March 6, 1746 (new style) sounded highly important. It bore the title of Vice-Treasurer and Receiver-General and Paymaster-General of all His Majesty's Revenues, and Treasurer of War for the Kingdom;[1] on these points it was subordinate to the supervision of Pitt's friend Chesterfield, who held the post of lord-lieutenant of Ireland. His colleague, the second paymaster, was a cousin, Lord Cholmondeley, the son of his aunt, Essex Cholmondeley. However, the importance of these Irish offices was not regarded as very serious. The business was scanty in comparison with the work of the corresponding English offices, and to this the subordinate officials were equal; thus the higher posts were regarded more or less as sinecures, the endowment of which was a burden upon the Irish treasury.[2] This was indeed by no means Chesterfield's view of the case; in contrast to the work of his predecessors, his administration was both vigorous and beneficial,[3] but for

[1] Thackeray, i. 147.
[2] Lecky, *History of England*, ii. 227 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, ii. 429.

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Pitt it meant nothing more than the provision of a high retaining salary. Two subordinate officials, Mr. Clements and Mr. Gardiner, entered into immediate communication with him,[1] and instructed him upon the usual procedure. It would first be necessary for him to secure the permission of the Irish Parliament to take the oath of office in England (there was thus no expectation that he would actually go to Dublin); when this permission had been secured, which cost[2] no less than £152, 10s. 4d., and the oath had been taken, he would be able to appoint his representatives. The above-mentioned gentlemen had already been provisionally appointed to this post by the lord-lieutenant. Naturally this appointment required nothing more than confirmation, for Mr. Gardiner proceeded to explain to his new superior the usual method of conducting business. Pitt was to receive the accounts and, which was the important point, £50 for himself each week, while every quarter the remainder of his profits would be transmitted. Pitt thus had nothing else to do than to pocket a very considerable salary, for it would be impossible for him at a distance to exercise any supervision upon his subordinates.

During this period, therefore, he was able to continue his parliamentary work undisturbed, naturally in favour of the ministerial demands as before. He departed even further from the standpoint he had adopted. Upon the Hanoverian question the pretence had been hitherto maintained of adopting a different system, and one that Pitt had formerly recommended, though in reality things remained exactly as they had been. Now that Pitt's secession was no longer to be feared the mask was thrown off. Supplies were asked, not for the queen-empress, but for the Hanoverian troops, and further subsidy treaties were concluded without hesitation.[3] The immediate object was to regain the king's favour, which had been lost by the expulsion of Granville, by the general resignation, and the elevation of Pitt. It was therefore necessary to give the monarch, as far as possible, all that with which Carteret had formerly provided him. Pitt and his friends now came forward to support all the measures of the

[1] Letter of March 8, 1745-6, to Pitt: Chatham MSS.
[2] Accounts in Chatham MSS.
[3] Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, i. 379 ff.

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ministry, although these were in direct contradiction to the arguments they had formerly used.[1] Richard Grenville had previously declared that his own blood should be shed before he would vote for a single Hanoverian soldier. He now showed no hesitation in voting for all the forces that were required. Lyttelton and the three Grenvilles, in the course of the discussion in the House of Commons on April 8, 1746, confined their support to voting, but Pitt went further, and ventured to speak on behalf of the proposal. The contents of his speech, however, have unfortunately not been preserved to us. He brought down upon himself a violent attack from Dr. Lee, a friend of Lord Granville and a supporter of the king's interests, who proceeded to expose the utter inconsistency of Pitt's behaviour; for the first time the great orator made no attempt at defence, and left the House to interpret his silence as they pleased. This action seemed somewhat extraordinary to his opponents, and they refrained from further attacks, probably fearing that another onslaught would provoke some violent outbreak. The ministerial party were delighted with Pitt's behaviour, and were loud in their praises. Pelham asserted that Pitt possessed the dignity of Wyndham, the wit of Pulteney, with the insight and intelligence of Sir Robert Walpole.[2]

Though Pitt was the object of few attacks in Parliament, where his oratorical powers were feared, he had on several occasions to suffer under the assaults of pamphleteers.[3] One satire made use of the late Duchess of Marlborough, representing her ghost as appearing and lamenting Pitt's abandonment of those principles on account of which she had favoured him. Another, the 'Unembarrassed Countenance,' composed in the form of a ballad, stigmatised the effrontery with which Pitt had adopted the policy of his former opponents, and had completely changed his views upon the Hanoverian question.[4] The conclusion expressed the pious wish that he might stand in the pillory in Cheapside, his head besmeared with eggs.[5] As Pitt thought it beneath his dignity to reply

[1] Horace Walpole's *Letters to Mann*, ii. 113, April 15, 1746. Cp. p. 269.
[2] Newcastle to Cumberland: Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, i. 309.
[3] Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, ii. 235.
[4] Cp. on this point *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 208, where selections from the poems are printed. For the ballads see Vol. iii. App. ii. No. 3.
[5] Yellow and white were the Hanoverian colours.

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to such insults, his friend Lyttelton took up the cudgels on his behalf. In a poetical epistle to Pitt he attempted to justify and to praise his behaviour. As he was really fighting for his own cause, for he had been guilty of similar change, he published the poem anonymously, and at a later date, when he had broken with Pitt, was unwilling to acknowledge its authorship. The most striking passage runs as follows:—

'Blest Genius, with each shining talent born,
Whom letters polish and whom arts adorn,
Fit as thy country calls, with equal skill
To watch her dangers, or her triumphs fill;
Erst, Tully-like, ordained to loud applause,
You pleaded liberty's and England's cause;
Foremost in ardent patriot bands you stood,
A firm Opposer—for the public good—
While power's rude hand, tho' by yourself disdained
You felt, indignant for an injured land.
The danger past, becalm'd you now declare
A generous truce nor wage a needless war.
By sharing power be now your candour seen;
A private station would be arrant spleen;
To prove your justice you must Greatness bear,
And suffer honours you are doomed to wear.'

Here the poet well explains how it was possible and even advisable for Pitt in accepting office to disregard the corrupt and even despicable character of the ministry. The desire to be of service to the state, and to give a brilliant example of uprightness, was his justification. All this, however, does not explain the inconsistency of Pitt's action upon the Hanoverian question. On this question the poem propounds the theory that his resistance to the Hanoverian policy was merely a tactical manœuvre, and not the expression of his own convictions. Pitt had made peace for definite and justifiable reasons, and might therefore cease his old line of action upon this question. This, however, is precisely the reproach which his opponents levelled against him, a reproach not obviated by this explanation. Nor do we find that Pitt himself made any effort to clear his character with respect to his former policy.

Lyttelton's poem contains other interesting lines, which are evidence of the high esteem in which he held his friend, and of the great hopes which he had placed upon him. After an expression of regret that so capable a man should secure no

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better post than the Irish paymastership, the poem proceeds as follows:—

'Yet fear we not; tho' now in western skies
You seem to sink, 'tis but again to rise.
When in those strains which wondering senates hear
You win with sacred truth the royal ear,
And stand ere long a Favourite near the throne
—For to be favoured is but to be known—
Then British annals shall new wonders trace
Wide power unenvy'd and domestic peace;
Charmed into rest, loud Factions shall agree,
Nor fear a minister, when Pitt is he!'

This prophecy was not to be confirmed for a long period, for Pitt and his monarch were divided by a lofty barrier which must first be broken down, and this was the oligarchy.

For the moment, indeed, his relations with the king took a turn for the better, and this fact had no doubt aroused Lyttelton's hopes. As Pitt zealously supported Hanoverian interests in Parliament, and abandoned his former principles of opposition, George II. now began to entertain a more favourable opinion of his merits. He may, indeed, have conceived hopes of utilising, in the interests of his dynasty, that important power which he had hitherto regarded as essentially hostile. One case is generally quoted as evidence of the confidence existing between Pitt and the king, though whether it can be regarded as such is at the best doubtful.[1] A question arose concerning a vote of money for the Duke of Cumberland, a sum of £25,000, which was to be asked from Parliament. Pitt had spoken strongly in favour of the claim in order to please the king, and George II. was thereupon induced to request him to introduce the motion, an arrangement which was not carried out, at Cumberland's desire. The king's action might indeed have been inspired by pure benevolence, but it might also have been intended to embarrass Pitt and to aim a blow at him, since he did not care to be known as the representative of court interests. It is difficult to decide between the two explanations.[2]

Such was the position of affairs when the military paymaster, Winnington, died on April 23, and the opportunity was thereby

[1] *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 207.

[2] H. Walpole relates of the year 1751 that the king never spoke to Pitt; in the previous year the Pelhams had had great difficulty in inducing the king to speak a word to him at a levée.—Walpole, *George II.*, i. 100.

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afforded for a redistribution of offices. It was now possible to provide Pitt with a higher office, demanding some real energy and carrying a seat in the king's privy council. Even now it was impossible to obtain the king's consent to Pitt's appointment as secretary of war, the office which he preferred,[1] although that too changed hands, but the king offered no objection to Pitt's appointment as military paymaster. It was a post with an income of £3000 a year,[2] apart from many subsidiary sources of profit, and was therefore more generally desired than the secretaryship of war. The arrangement was concluded with considerable rapidity, for as early as April 26 Newcastle was empowered by the king to inform Pitt of his appointment, whence we can conclude that the matter was not delayed.

The other changes were somewhat remarkable. The secretary of war was Yonge, who was relieved of his post and provided with the sinecure which Pitt had hitherto held, that is to say, half pensioned off. His place was taken by Henry Fox, whose elevation was due to his patrons, the Dukes of Cumberland and Bedford. On May 6 Pitt received his patent as Paymaster-General of the Forces, as his official title ran, and shortly afterwards, on May 28, he took the oath of Privy Councillor.[3] A seat in the cabinet was not connected with this post, but he now had an opportunity for the first time, apart from his short service as cornet of horse, to use his capacities and his knowledge directly in the service of his country, and not merely in attempts to influence Parliament.

[1] Walpole, *George II.*, i. 110.

[2] Account in the Chatham MSS.—

For his own salary per annum, . .	£3000
For his Under Officers and Clerks, etc.,	1500
For contingencies per annum, . .	600
Summa, .	£5100

Hence the statement in *Bedford Correspondence*, i. 76, that Pitt's income amounted to £5000 is not absolutely correct.

[3] Protocol in Chatham MSS.

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CHAPTER XII

PITT AS PAYMASTER-GENERAL OF THE FORCES

Pitt's promotion brought about a certain change in his attitude towards his friends. Hitherto they had generally recognised the leadership of Cobham throughout the different changes, and Pitt's occasional attempts at independent action secured no imitators. Now, however, an important difference began. It was Pitt's chief interest to keep on good terms with the Pelhams. This object was regarded by him as more important than consideration for his old patron.[1] He publicly disavowed his former attitude towards Walpole, and wounded Cobham in consequence; he secured the appointment of James Grenville as deputy-paymaster, thus attaching Grenville to himself and separating him from Cobham. Cobham's remaining followers, when this breach began to widen, followed their powerful companion, whose rising star seemed to offer better prospects than the waning light of their previous patron. Henceforward Pitt might be regarded as the leader of the former boy patriots, now the Grenville Association. This group held an important position at the present moment, as Pelham felt their support essential to defend him from those parliamentary attacks which he loathed, and it was therefore considered inadvisable to cross their purposes. Thus a large number of important offices fell into their hands.[2]

Before considering Pitt's dealings in office, it is necessary to glance at foreign affairs, with which naturally the paymaster of the forces was closely connected.

Upon the appearance of Cumberland at the seat of war the Jacobite rebellion rapidly came to an end. When the prince attempted to besiege Stirling, he was again thwarted by the want of discipline among his adherents. He was obliged to

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 424.

[2] *Marchmont Papers*, i. 223.

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retreat further northward, to the county of Inverness, pursued by the duke, who was anxious to deal a decisive blow. A lengthy pursuit might have endangered the results of the Flanders campaign, for not only the general, but also the troops now employed against the Pretender, had been withdrawn from military operations in that country. The boldness of the prince, who attempted to oppose his far stronger enemy at Culloden, near the Moray Firth, brought about his final overthrow. In spite of a brave resistance, the badly disciplined rebel army was defeated and scattered on April 16 by Cumberland's well-trained troops. The prince was forced to flee, and reached France after manifold adventures, while Scotland suffered the usual judicial prosecutions, which were dictated by the panic-stricken and ungenerous spirit prevailing among the leaders of the victorious party. The view that the champions of a well-founded constitution, at least equivalent in value to that existing, the convinced representatives of the real legitimate dynasty, should be treated as something better than common criminals, could make no head against cowardice and the claims of self-interest. Only Chesterfield attempted to divert the attention of the government from unnecessary acts of revenge to the far more necessary task of preventive measures, by emphasising the necessity for bringing the Scottish Highlands under cultivation.[1] In this way, by laying out highroads and gradually suppressing the system of clans, which had secured the chiefs in dangerous independence, it would be possible ultimately to overcome those dangers which the existence of the rude northern mountaineers had implied from primitive times.

England's necessity during the Pretender's rebellion was meanwhile turned to the utmost advantage by the French. Instead of opening a way to London for the adventurous prince by an invasion, the Maréchal de Saxe preferred to begin the new campaign at an early date, and seized the capital of the Austrian Netherlands and other important places in the course of his operations. The campaign of 1746 was so disastrous for the allies in this quarter that eventually the whole country was in the hands of the enemy. On the other hand the Austrians were successful in Italy, while the French power was weakened by the death of King Philip v. of

[1] Mahon, *History*, iii. 343 f.

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Spain, who was succeeded by Ferdinand VI., a prince with an aversion to war. In the following year Cumberland resumed the command in Flanders, which had hitherto been held by Prince Charles of Lorraine. Although he opened the campaign early in February, the apathy of the Dutch government prevented him from checking the advance of the French. They invaded Dutch Flanders, captured several important towns, and threatened most seriously to endanger the republic of the Netherlands. As in 1672, the imminence of the danger produced a change of action on the part of the United Provinces. The power of the aristocracy collapsed before the national indignation, and they were replaced in the conduct of military and diplomatic policy by Prince William of Nassau, who became stadtholder and captain-general. He was a son-in-law of George II., and was, so to speak, an incarnation of the Anglo-Dutch alliance; he showed himself ready to conduct operations in hearty co-operation with his brother-in-law. Even so advantageous a change was, however, unable to prevent further disasters. On April 2 the allied army of the English, Dutch, and Austrians was defeated at Lauffeld, and on September 15 the important fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom was allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy through the carelessness of the commander.

In spite of these important successes the French government now began to show themselves weary of the war; this was due to certain defeats at sea and in the colonies, and also to the shattered condition of their finances, for the improvement of which peace was imperative. They therefore proceeded to open negotiations through Colonel Ligonier, one of the Huguenot emigrants to England who had been made prisoner at Lauffeld. The result was the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was convoked to secure an accommodation between the many conflicting interests.

Thus during the last years of the war Pitt acted as paymaster for the troops. At the present day this office is regarded as an organic part of the ministry of war, but at that period it was an independent post side by side with the treasury and the war office. It was, in a sense, intermediary between the treasury and the military staff, transmitting the needs and claims of the latter to the treasury and receiving the necessary moneys from the treasury, after which it made

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payments to the war contractors. Subsidies for foreign princes and contingents also passed through the paymaster's hands.

The office was, however, dependent upon the treasury in so far as the latter had the right of examining the accounts in detail, a scrutiny often rigorously conducted. No unauthorised expenses were allowed to the subordinate officials who had made the payments in question. Naturally, too, the paymaster in the case of all extraordinary expenditure required an order of discharge.[1]

As under officials we find secretaries and deputy-paymasters. The former were attached to the central office, while the latter were placed partly here and partly at other posts where their energies could be best employed. Thus at that time in the pay-office, Mr. Peregrine Furze acted as secretary, and James Grenville as deputy-paymaster. Mr. Thomas Orby Hunter was stationed at Rotterdam as deputy-paymaster for the English and Dutch troops. He was succeeded in April 1747 by Mr. John Luke Nicoll, while similar functions were performed in Scotland by Mr. A. Sawyer. Officials on foreign service were obliged in special cases to follow the armies for the conduct of financial affairs at headquarters.

As regards the payment of the large subsidies, the agents of the states concerned, for instance those of Hanover and Austria, usually received the sums voted by Parliament directly from the London pay-office. Only in the case of the Dutch troops does the money seem to have been sent to Rotterdam to the deputy-paymaster there stationed. In the case of the foreign troops, the money was expended by their own officials, while for the English troops this task naturally fell to the lot of the paymasters and their assistants. The whole system of magazine supplies was in their charge, and this gave them an enormous amount of work, especially if the war took some unexpected course. It might happen that all the necessary supplies had been collected upon one road, and that the army followed another line of advance; it would then be necessary to provide the same quantity of material a second time, for which purpose their supply of money might be

[1] Authorities for what follows are: Letters of P. Furze and T. O. Hunter, *Chatham Papers*, i. 5-22; two letters from Sawyer to Pitt of November 14 and December 6, 1749, and two from J. L. Nicoll to J. Grenville of June 28, 1748 and January 3, 1749, in the Chatham MSS., Public Record Office.

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insufficient. Money was frequently lacking, for the reason that the expenditure outran the estimates or because remittances were delayed; credit was then strained, with expensive results. The Scottish paymaster was constantly complaining of these difficulties, and proposed that certain sources of revenue should be appropriated to his use on the spot, to avoid the necessity of continual interchange of messages. Nicoll in Rotterdam, even after the conclusion of peace, loudly complained of the lack of money, as new demands were continually sent to him. The case was even worse with the fleet in countries beyond Europe, to which the transmission of remittances was a very difficult matter. Admiral Boscawen in India secured money for the payment of his officers by bills drawn in Pitt's name, but they could only be discounted at 12½ per cent., and many declined to accept them.[1]

Under the Pelham government the strictest parsimony seems to have reigned: Sawyer in Scotland bitterly complained of the treatment he had received compared with his predecessors, and of the loss to his income by the refusal to allow the most absolutely necessary expenses. He besought Pitt to interfere on his behalf, but whether his request was realised we cannot say.

Comparatively few letters from the paymaster are now extant, but those that we have leave us with the impression that Pitt left the details of business for the most part to his subordinates, as indeed was usual in these high offices. At times he received reports upon financial transactions, but these were sent, for the most part, to James Grenville or Peregrine Furze, his London assistants. Communications of this kind occupied an increasingly smaller space in his letters.[2] On the other hand, Pitt procured from Hunter in Rotterdam accurate information upon the events of the war, both of what Hunter himself could see and of what he had learnt concerning its progress elsewhere. The letters are chiefly composed

[1] Boscawen to Pitt, Fort St. David, January 12, 1748.— Chatham MSS., Public Record Office.

[2] Hunter promises to give him as little writing to do as possible, in accordance with 'your leisure and conveniency.'— *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 13. The Hessian representative, Mr. Alt, spent ten days in vain attempts to secure an interview with Pitt upon the subsidies, though sent by Pelham, and was finally obliged to accept the offices of Furze.—Alt to Pitt, April 7, 1750, Chatham MSS., Public Record Office.

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of news relating to these matters. The fact seems to me to denote that Pitt even then had no great interest in financial affairs, just as at a later date he was accustomed to deal with them somewhat summarily. The military side of his office was of chief importance to him. He used it to extend his military knowledge and to gain special information of movements against the enemy, which might be useful to him in Parliament. Further evidence of the fact is provided by other military reports which exist among his papers of 1747-8. His object was to have the conduct of war—if not of this, of some future war. Hence he was anxious, not merely to secure the necessary knowledge, but also to acquire from the government and the people the reputation of a military expert. On this alone could he found any hopes that he might be regarded and called to office as the saviour of the nation in time of need.

His office gave him an opportunity of strengthening his position in another direction. He had always been a zealous opponent of any kind of bribery or corruption or illegal profit. His reputation in this respect had been largely diminished by his inability to prove the heavy charges which he had brought forward on this subject, and further by the fact that he had joined a political group which was obviously ready to adopt the employment of these forbidden means to any extent. The power of the Pelhams was based upon corruption in every conceivable form, and it was the Pelhams who had brought Pitt into office. This fact, however, did not make him directly disloyal to his principles, for he might point to his patriotism as his motive for taking office, a sentiment which would not allow him to retire from the service of his hard-pressed country. He might excuse his momentary renunciation, as indeed he did, by the assertion that far more important questions were now at hand. It would certainly have been dangerous in the extreme if he, as an official, had been guilty of those offences which he had so strongly condemned in others; the halo of absolute integrity with which popular opinion still surrounded him would have gone for ever. He knew that his actions were keenly observed, not only by his enemies, but also by his present patrons, for purity is always a thorn in the side of the impure. The discovery of malpractices would have enabled his enemies to

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undermine his position, while his patrons would have been more easily able to dismiss him from their service, even though his faults should be the same as theirs. On the other hand, it would be an incalculable advantage to him, now that he occupied a post unusually open to temptations of this kind, if he could preserve his integrity intact, and if, in the midst of a corrupt plutocracy, he could appear a monument of disinterestedness, a kind of inexorable Fabricius, unassailable by temptation. The wealth which he might have acquired by following the usual practices was of no great advantage to him. He was already in pecuniary independence, and it was not possible for him to amass money to an extent which would have enabled him to rival the parliamentary influence of those in power. His renunciation may, too, have been facilitated by a disinclination for financial business and a general contempt for the pecuniary side of questions. There were far better prospects if he remained absolutely true to his principles upon this point, and thus acquired a popularity with which the reigning ministers would have some day to deal. Long ago he had recognised two foundations upon which he might rise to supreme power—the confidence of the nation and the favour of the king. Here was an opportunity to establish one of these foundations by acquiring the national confidence, and to strengthen the other by winning the king's favour—an opportunity which Pitt was careful to turn to the best account. We do not mean to imply that his conscience did not also urge him upon the disinterested path; had it been the case, however, that his political future could have been better secured by following the usual practice, or have been secured by no other means, it is very questionable whether he would have given way to the promptings of his better self. He was, indeed, induced to embark, throughout his career of political advancement, upon many a course the morality of which was disputable. Had, for instance, his pecuniary independence not already been secured, it is impossible to assert that he would have proved so conscientious.

There are two cases in which his disinterested behaviour was especially conspicuous.[1] The first is as follows: It had been the usual practice for the military paymaster to receive a permanent advance of £100,000, which he invested in the state

[1] Related in Almon's *Anecdotes*, i. 152 f.

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bonds until the need for this money arose, and used the interest in the meantime, which might amount to £3000 or £4000 a year, for his own purposes. This was a dangerous procedure, which might, in special circumstances, ruin the paymaster and inflict heavy loss upon the state: if, as might easily happen at the outset of a war, the bonds declined greatly in value, the paymaster could only have realised at a heavy loss, and would have been forced to make up the deficit from his own purse. It was then customary to adopt the worst possible expedient, namely, to hinder the progress of operations until the financial tightness had passed over. Pitt declined to continue this illegal practice with its dangerous consequences. He absolutely resigned his claim to the usual high interest, and deposited the whole of the capital in the Bank of England, where it was at his disposal at any moment. The other case referred to certain profits to be made on the payments of subsidies. It had become customary for the King of Sardinia and the Queen of Hungary, who had been in receipt of subsidies for years past, to hand over one-half per cent. of the sum involved, before each payment was made, to the paymaster through whose hands the money passed. Had Pitt retained the custom and carried it out in every case, he would have been able to secure a considerable income, for the reason that the system of subsidies was largely extended at this period. From Austria alone he would have received £2500 a year. However, he valued his popularity and his reputation higher than this advantage. He declared that what Parliament had voted ought to be paid over without any subtraction, and declined to receive the money. When the King of Sardinia, who was astounded at such unusual disinterestedness, proposed to make him a present of an equivalent sum, he politely refused.

It may easily be imagined that behaviour of this kind made a vast impression upon the nation, which was accustomed to see the state regarded as a milch cow by its rulers. Pitt had never calculated more exactly than he had done in looking for this effect, and in expecting a wholly adequate return for the money he had renounced. Not only did he rise in the estimation of the nation at large, but the government, and finally the king, began to entertain a better opinion of his character. Hitherto, they had regarded him as an extreme egoist, who

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was the more dangerous from his power of assuming the character of a patriot, and of making his patriotic sentiments credible to the nation by his eloquence. He had now given an immediate and striking proof of the fact that those principles which had often been enounced in lofty and striking language were something more than words, and that he was capable of making enormous sacrifices to the state. Where else in England could be found a man of moderate means who was willing to sacrifice to his patriotism a yearly revenue of some £8000?

The new paymaster had thus won esteem in every quarter, and the Duke of Newcastle now attempted to use his prestige for his own purposes. Pitt's excellent behaviour in office reflected credit upon himself, for it was he who had used his utmost efforts to gain the post for Pitt. Now he hoped, with Pitt's help, to be able to execute the plans which he was pursuing in opposition to his colleagues, and to make Pitt the fundamental support of the system of government which he hoped to introduce. The ministry was by no means so harmonious as it appeared. Henry Pelham and Harrington were steadily pursuing the object which had received the approval of the majority, the attainment of a speedy peace, while Newcastle, in accordance with the king's wishes, was hoping to turn the war in his favour, and to secure advantages not only for England, but also for Hanover.[1] He hoped to win Pitt over to his views, for strongly as Pitt had inveighed against the extravagance of Carteret's plans, he knew him to be a military character at bottom. War was his profession, and he opposed it only when he could not hope to conduct it, as in Carteret's time. The duke's present plan was essentially the system that was to be pursued with such brilliant success during the Seven Years' War: at home a union between Newcastle and Pitt, and abroad an alliance with Prussia against France, with the difference that Pitt was to occupy a more dependent position than he afterwards held, and that Austria was to become a member of the Great Alliance.

The first necessity was to secure the position of Newcastle and his adherents on a foundation so impregnable as to enable their unimpeded advance. The duke could not break with Henry Pelham without endangering his own position, and he

[1] Cp. Coxe, *Pelham Administration*; *Chatham Papers*, i. 27.

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therefore attempted to secure an accommodation with him. The brothers are said to have negotiated through a third party for a long period in order to avoid an outburst of passion.[1] On this side there were no serious obstacles, for Pelham was quite satisfied to be left without opposition in Parliament. The more dangerous opponent was Harrington, who, as secretary of foreign affairs, did his best to urge on the peace. He was opposed by Newcastle, who interfered with his efforts, tampered with his ambassadors, and undid his measures with the approval of the king, who had conceived an objection to his former favourite since the business of the resignation. When the injured minister complained to the king, he met with so cold a reception that he found himself obliged to resign on October 24.[2] He was replaced by Chesterfield, who was known to be a capable diplomatist, and was now in full agreement with Newcastle. Pelham then took a step which was generally deemed impossible. Through the mediation of a certain Robert Nugent, afterwards Lord Nugent, he invited the two men to his house, and effected a reconciliation with Lord Granville, with whom he henceforward lived on terms of close confidence.

All this happened in November 1746, and the parliamentary campaign was now begun. The results were not wholly satisfactory, although no great opposition was encountered. Harrington's removal had aroused fresh hostility and strengthened the forces of the opposition. It also became obvious that the composition of the House of Commons no longer reflected the existing distribution of power and influence. The House had been elected when the disposition of party groups and of adherents had been far different from the actual state of affairs. Many a member who had formerly given his vote for the Pelhams now belonged to some hostile group, while others who had formerly been excluded were now possible candidates for a seat. Some or other of the ministerial adherents had also, perhaps, lost their votes by accepting some office. To restore the proper proportion between the parties, and to enable the ruling party to use the whole of their considerable influence and thus to secure their position, the government resolved at the beginning of June 1747 upon the dissolution of Parliament, an unusual step and one upon which

[1] *Marchmont Papers*, i. 223. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184.

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no Hanoverian king had yet ventured.[1] The resolution was concluded in an extraordinary sitting of the privy council at Kensington on Wednesday, June 3 (old style), at which Pitt was present, and a few days afterwards their intentions were carried into effect. The king's writs provided that the elections in all town and country corporations should be completed within forty days, and a general election began which threw the whole country into excitement.

The government had made their preparations with great care, and the unexpected nature of their step and the great wealth at their disposal gave them a considerable advantage over their opponents. They were further favoured by the fact that the rebellion had aroused a deep dislike of Jacobitism.[2] Some of the great landed nobility who possessed wide influence were created peers of the realm, and thus secured; notorious adherents of the Prince of Wales were removed from their posts with the object of deterring would-be supporters; secret instructions were sent to the Duke of Cumberland in the Netherlands to remain for the moment on the defensive, lest some military disaster should turn national feeling against the government; and the Duke of Newcastle went in person to the counties of Surrey and Kent to secure the rapid completion of the election.

As in the election of 1741, the opposition was led by Prince Frederick. Upon the fall of Carteret he had joined the king against the Pelhams, but when George II. sanctioned Pitt's elevation to office, and became somewhat reconciled to him and to Newcastle, the prince had gradually gone over to the other extreme, though he was indeed rather opposed to the ministers than to his father. Once again it was Lord Bolingbroke who determined his action.[3] On Bolingbroke's advice the prince used his dignity as Duke of Cornwall to advance certain claims, which should have given him greater influence upon the elections in that duchy. In particular he claimed, as a long-standing privilege, the right of appointing and holding the Stannary Courts. This the government declined

[1] The information on these elections is drawn from the reports of the Prussian ambassador of $\frac{5}{16}$ June to $\frac{23 \text{ June}}{4 \text{ July}}$ 1747.

[2] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i.: Pelham to Lyttelton, July 11, 1747.

[3] Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, ii. 50; Almon, *Anecdotes*, i. 155.

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to admit, and he therefore resumed his attitude of opposition. It was his attitude that had chiefly decided the ministers to dissolve Parliament, for in the previous elections, in which the divided government had shown little energy, he had been comparatively successful. In the present elections his chief supporters were Dr. Ayscough, Lyttelton's brother-in-law, and Thomas Pitt of Boconnock, who held the post of warden of the Stannaries of Cornwall.[1] In concert with them the prince drew up a complete plan, showing the seats to be gained and the candidates at their disposal. Their safest seat seemed to be Old Sarum, for which upon this occasion the adopted candidate was not William Pitt, but Lord Middlesex, the eldest son of the Duke of Dorset, who had just lost his post as lord of the treasury,[2] and whom the prince had appointed master of the horse. He was successfully elected. The other seats in question were chiefly situated in Cornwall, though also in the centre and east of southern England.

The results were unexpectedly disastrous to the opposition. Notwithstanding all their efforts a large number of seats were lost, and even where the prince thought his cause was safe, ministerial intrigues secured the election of hostile candidates. Thomas Pitt and Ayscough were deeply despondent at the result, the more so as they had inspired the prince with hopes of winning great successes. They were especially dismayed by the election in Oakhampton, where they had not succeeded in excluding Ayscough's brother-in-law, George Lyttelton, who had lately gone over to the ministerial party. This question brought about a family dispute in consequence of a breach of faith on the part of Lyttelton, which was not easily excused. As he himself admitted, he had pledged his word to the prince that he would not oppose the prince's candidate, a certain Montague, but in the course of the election some influential members of the corporation, on whose loyalty Thomas had counted, applied to Lyttelton, who allowed himself to be proposed for candidature and elected with Thomas, who had already made certain of a seat. He then asserted that the departure of Thomas from Oakhampton had led him to suppose that Montague's candidature had been

[1] This and the following are from the Dropmore MSS., pp. 107-135, which contain the correspondence between the prince and his adherents.

[2] Reports of the Prussian embassy.

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abandoned; this, however, was undoubtedly an idle excuse, for he might easily have informed himself upon the situation from Ayscough. Lyttelton also manifested no intention of resigning the seat he had thus unfairly secured. The whole affair had been previously arranged between the members of the government, for shortly before his departure to the election Lyttelton was seen leaving Pelham's house, and in company with William Pitt, who thus seems to have played some part in his friend's intrigue. Nobody took any serious view of the matter after the publication of the facts, for corruption of every kind was too common to call for notice.

The prince soon recovered from the defeat he had received, and succeeded in inspiring some confidence among his desponding supporters. He invited Thomas for the hunting to Clifden in Buckinghamshire, where he was accustomed to spend the autumn. It was upon this occasion that a man came into the life of the prince who was to be of considerable importance in English history, and in the career of William Pitt.[1] When the prince's party one day visited the races of Egham, near Windsor, they were surprised by a shower of rain, which prevented their departure for the moment. A whist party was therefore arranged, and to make up the hand the prince invited a Scottish lord who was on the spot, had made a favourable impression upon him at the moment, and afterwards secured his own favour and that of the princess. This was John Stuart, the second Earl of Bute, son of James Stuart, hereditary sheriff of the island of Bute, who had been made an earl in 1703, and had remained a loyalist during the revolt of 1715. John's mother was a sister of the Duke of Argyle, and with him we shall soon have to make a closer acquaintance.

In this election William Pitt was provided with a seat by the government, from which fact it is clear that without connections and great expense no candidate, however popular, could hope for election. Pitt himself was careful not to employ bribery; he preferred to let others work upon his behalf, though they afterwards claimed his support as a right. Upon this occasion Pitt was imposed as a candidate upon the rotten borough of Seaford in Sussex, one of the well-known cinque

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. Bute; *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fifth Rep.*, App., p. 617.

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ports.[1] Newcastle supported his candidature to make sure of a seat that had hitherto been held by a certain W. Hall Gage, and his success was probably bought at a high price, for the inhabitants, who lived chiefly upon smuggling, were accustomed to sell their votes dearly. Pitt was also present at the election, which was not, however, uncontested. A petition against his election was brought before the new House of Commons, but rejected by a majority of 151. The great majority which had been successfully secured was thus able to strengthen itself by winning doubtful constituencies. Other men attained their objects more easily. Richard Grenville boasted that he had not spent a penny over his election to the town of Buckingham, where he had defeated by a considerable majority an opponent whose expenditure was very generous.[2]

Thus Pitt again entered the House of Commons, though we do not find that he developed any great activity for the moment within the House; only one of his speeches is known for the winter of 1747-8,[3] and this was delivered only with the object of refuting a personal attack. Sir William Stanhope, Chesterfield's brother, had poured contempt upon the Grenville group, which he continued to call by the name of Cobhamites, and had bitterly reproached them for their change of party; they had hidden their ambition under the name of patriotism, and while denouncing the traffic in offices had thus trafficked themselves. They had brought pressure to bear upon the king and had shown scandalous ingratitude to the Prince of Wales, and they owed their present position to Cobham's bribery and to the pusillanimity of the Pelhams—all of which charges contained an element of truth. The orator's outpourings were interrupted by a call to order. Pitt then rose to reply. His speech upon this occasion dealt less with refutation than in violent counter-accusations, expressions of anger and insults, an attitude which was certainly not the result of want of self-control, but of calculation. Had he attempted to produce evidence to refute these charges, a somewhat doubtful impression would have been made in view of the element of truth upon which the charges were based, and criticism might have

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 65.

[2] R. Grenville to Pitt, June 25 and 28, 1747.—Chatham MSS., Public Record Office.

[3] *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 211 f.

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been aroused, somewhat endangering his prestige. But when he paid his opponent back in his own coin, the duel appeared nothing more than an unimportant wrangle between two adversaries, whose mutual insults were undeserving of serious consideration. Every one was accustomed upon such occasions to hear nothing but lies and boundless exaggerations. His mode of reply reduced the arguments of his opponents to a lower level in the opinion of his auditors, and their effect was correspondingly diminished. It was, moreover, well known than Stanhope's attack was actuated rather by personal motives than by facts. He had fought a constituency against the Grenvilles, and his brother, Lord Chesterfield, had just been removed from his office as secretary of state.

Domestic policy, as we have seen, was dominated by the opposition between Newcastle and Pelham, who represented the policies of war and peace. The former set his hopes upon Prussia, and in February 1748, before the peace congress had been opened at Aix-la-Chapelle, he sent a man of some distinction, Henry Bilson Legge, upon a special commission to Berlin, in the hope of inducing King Frederick to take a part in the war in return for a guarantee of all his possessions, including Silesia.[1] However, the duke's attempts to fulfil the wishes of his king met with little success. Legge did not confine himself to the line of discussion marked out for him, but proceeded to discuss an alliance of peace with the Prussian government, which was by no means to the duke's taste. He was disavowed and recalled. Moreover, Newcastle was unable to find any suitable occupant for the second secretaryship of state for foreign affairs. Every one of his appointments proceeded to support the peace policy, and no one could be induced to join the duke in furthering the king's inclinations. Harrington had been deposed for his pacific views, and his successor, Chesterfield, soon followed in his footsteps. He, too, worked for a general pacification, and a breach arose between him and Newcastle, for the reason that he had secured the favour of the king's mistress, the Countess of Yarmouth, and attempted to rule the king by means of her. He was defeated in the struggle, and resigned his office on February 6, 1748. He was replaced against the wish of the conqueror

[1] Cp. on this point the proposed English coalition of 1743; *Forschungen zur Brand-Preuss. Geschichte*, i.

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by the Duke of Bedford, who was no less inclined for peace, so that the breach between the secretaries of state remained as before. Eventually the king and Newcastle were forced to give way, the more so as their hopes of Prussia proved ill-founded; in March 1748 the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was opened, and at the end of April the preliminary discussion began between France on the one hand, and England and Holland on the other, while on October 18, 1748, the general peace was accomplished. England had gained nothing in the long struggle, though she had, thanks to successes by sea and in the colonies, suffered no great losses. Only the national debt had considerably increased.

During the whole of this affair Pitt continued to support Newcastle, whose war policy corresponded with his own views, the more so as it brought him into connection with the king. He favoured the despatch of Legge, whose confidence he enjoyed, and whom he seems to have helped.[1] He also thought that it was highly desirable to secure the co-operation of Prussia, but when this proved impossible he agreed to the termination of the overtures.[2] He spoke of the event as fortunate, not because he regarded the compromise as advantageous, but because he considered it absolutely necessary in view of the position of affairs.

As regards Pitt's domestic life, his improved private means had enabled him to purchase the property of South Lodge at Enfield, a district in which his parents had formerly lived for a short time. Here he spent the summer, busied in laying out his gardens, in which task he showed considerable interest and taste. He spent some £500 in the arrangement of his house and gardens.[4] His friends, Legge, Lyttelton and others visited him during the parliamentary sessions, when they could not return to their own more distant estates, to enjoy some snipe-shooting and intellectual society.[5] During these

[1] Cp. Legge's correspondence with Pitt, *Chatham Papers*, i. 24 ff. and 28 ff.
[2] *Grenville Papers*, i., April 26, 1748.
[3] *Chatham Papers*, i. 25, note 2.
[4] Accounts in Chatham MSS.
[5] Legge to Pitt, July 10, 1748: 'I consider S. Lodge as an accession to the common stock and Republick of Sportsmen, which from its situation will bring peculiar advantages along with it and that the woodcocks and snipes of Enfield may be visited at seasons of the year when those of Hampshire will not be so accessible.' Chatham MSS. Legge to Lyttelton, 13/2 October 1748: 'I feast my

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years he also saw much of his cousin, John Pitt,[1] a son of that George Pitt of Strathfieldsaye, with whom we often meet in the life of the governor Thomas. George had two sons. The elder, George, inherited his father's property, and was afterwards made Baron Rivers. The second son, John, inherited from his mother (the two sons were by different marriages) the fine estates of Encombe and Kingston, in Dorsetshire. The second wife of the elder George Pitt was the last representative of the family of Grey, and was descended from the Duke of Suffolk, the father of that unfortunate Jane Grey who was Queen of England for a short time. John was highly influential in his own county, and held several state offices at that time, so that his friendship implied for Pitt a considerable increase of power. The estate of Encombe, which Pitt was fond of visiting, lay near Corfe Castle on the sea, in the south-east of Dorsetshire. The road to the estate led through a magnificent gorge, a turn in which suddenly displayed a view of the open sea. Here lay the tasteful house on the terrace of a hill, and before it was seen a lake, which looked like an arm of the sea, but which was in reality on a higher level, and delivered its overflow into the sea through a romantic gorge. It was a spot eminently suited to provide rest for body and soul to a weary man, but the gout drove Pitt to pay continual visits to Bath, so that he had not much time to spend at Encombe.

During the winter of 1747-8 Pitt suffered greatly from his malady, and was obliged to give up business for a considerable time. Upon the cessation of hostilities his work as paymaster was considerably diminished, and as soon as he felt stronger it became his object to secure some higher office, which would enable him to share in the actual work of government; in other words, a cabinet office. This object he plainly kept in view throughout the numerous intrigues which ran their course directly after the conclusion of peace.

The first result of the termination of the war was the addi-

imagination frequently with those parties you mention for next winter to Enfield Chase, those *Noctes cænæque Deorum* at which we will discourse politics, poetry or that greatest of all *Nepenthes*, nonsense *pro re nata*, and as our genius shall prompt.'—*Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *Fifteenth Rep.*, App., part I. (Dartmouth MSS.) vol. viii. p. 167.

[1] Cp. on this point Lady Chatterton, *Memorials of Admiral Lord Gambier*, (London, 1861), i., containing a number of Pitt's letters to John Pitt.

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tion of important reinforcements to the opposition party. All who had remained quiescent, or had supported the government from patriotism as long as the state was in danger, now renewed their activity, and the prince, as their leader, again occupied a position of importance.[1] The general idea that the moment of his accession was not far distant tended to diminish the government majority. Many adherents of the Pelhams began secret communications with the heir-apparent in order to secure their position in any event. A formal contract was drawn up between the prince and the opposition, and all who were willing to join their side.[2] This document had been composed and employed before the elections of 1747; it was now brought forth once more and became the programme of the prince's party. It consisted chiefly of the theories of Bolingbroke's school, which at the present moment, April 1748, had changed but little from the form under which they appeared in the 'Patriot King.'[3] The prince declared war upon the party system and the prevailing corruption, and undertook to carry a series of measures which would abolish these evils, when he should have the power to do so, in other words, when he had ascended the throne. Patriotic members were no longer to be excluded on account of their party leanings; officers were to be admitted to the House of Commons from regimental commanders upwards; official maladministration was to come to an end, and only those were to be admitted to the government who were ready to support the prince on this point; they were thus to be known as the friends of himself and of his house, an idea afterwards realised by George III.; the prince's civil list was limited to the sum of £800,000, and he undertook to accept no higher amount, even if it were offered. In return for this promise he required from his adherents a guarantee of loyal support for all the measures which he proposed, for the strengthening of the Crown, for the furtherance of religion and morality, the formation of an upright and harmonious parliament, and the suppression of

[1] Cp. Almon, *Anecdotes*, i. 155; Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, ii. 49.

[2] Printed in the *Bedford Correspondence*, ed. Russell, i. under date February 8, 1748.

[3] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 425 f. The document was sent to G. Lyttelton, who desired the omission of the portion relating to himself, in view of the position which he held, and the postponement of the publication: Bolingbroke did not fall in with his wishes.—*Ibid.*, ii. 428 ff.

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partisanship and corruption. It is impossible to determine the names of those who subscribed to this agreement. The Cobham group, with the exception of Pitt and his immediate friends, is said to have supported the prince; but on September 13, 1749, Viscount Cobham died, and the group was left without a leader. His property and title passed to his sister, Mrs. Hester Grenville, whose heir was Richard Grenville. Acting upon Pitt's advice, her sons made efforts to secure the Temple title of Countess for their mother, in which attempt they were successful, owing to the intervention of the Pelhams; Richard then took the courtesy title of Lord Cobham, while his brothers and sisters became the Honourable or the Lady respectively.[1] They naturally could not contemplate any breach with the government, but many others were attracted from their party to the rising star, in particular, Bubb Dodington, who resigned his office in March 1749[2] upon the simple request of the prince that he should enter his service. Thus a new opposition was constituted; it was further strengthened by the fact that the prince increased his popularity by his affability, by his prohibition of French fashions at his court,[3] and by his condemnation of the Hanoverian policy. As the prince's court was now settled in Leicester House, his party was known as the Leicester House party, a name afterwards transferred to the adherents of his widow and his son.

While the opposition thus concentrated its organisation, and secured a steady flow of reinforcements, the ministerial party, as we have seen, was by no means at harmony with itself. It was, therefore, of high importance to the government that Pitt and some others, Lyttelton, Fox, and Murray, should loyally continue their support. Pitt made serious efforts to restore the former unity, and acted as mediator between the two Pelhams, a service recognised with gratitude.[4] He continued, however, to remain on Newcastle's side, whose greater parliamentary influence offered him better guarantees for the future in the case of a change of monarchs than

[1] Cp. *Grenville Papers*.
[2] Cp. *Bubb Dodington's Diary*, ed. Wyndham. London, 1785.
[3] Phillimore, ii. 420.
[4] Henry Pelham to Newcastle: Newcastle Papers in *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 35, note.

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Pelham could hold out. Hitherto the duke had always fallen on his feet. His relations with Pitt now reached a cordiality which they had never attained before or afterwards, and the reasons for this we have yet to consider. The only dangerous point in this relationship was the serious personal difference existing between Newcastle and the prince, which might have hazardous results for the future. In February 1748-9 the Duke of Somerset, who was chancellor of Cambridge University, died, and Prince Frederick was anxious to secure this lucrative post; Newcastle, however, anticipated him and gained the office for himself,[1] thus practically inflicting an open insult upon the heir-apparent.

Pitt's parliamentary activity, as usual at times when he belonged to the government party, was of no great importance. Few important questions were discussed, and if his opinion upon these diverged too widely from that of his friends, he held his tongue; at the same time he considered it imperative to give his support to the ministry, and again showed great dexterity in representing the measures he defended as inspired by patriotic motives, and in cutting the ground from under his adversaries' feet. For strictly logical proof he cared, as usual, but little, provided his arguments were specious and practically efficacious. Thus he supported the government bill which proposed to subject officers upon half-pay to martial law,[2] a measure characterised by its opponents as unconstitutional, and as leading to a dangerous extension of the power of the throne. Pitt defended the measure by asserting that it was impossible to resist aggressions of the executive, 'should the people entrench themselves behind parchment up to the teeth'; if they had no confidence in the justice of the government, it would be impossible for the state to continue. We can imagine how energetically he would have thundered against despotism, and demanded some parchment entrenchment, had a bill of this kind been introduced by Walpole. The opposition then proposed that the officers in question should be relieved of submission to routine discipline and only be subjected to the martial power for definite offences; here, again, Pitt objected, asserting that the inquiry thus necessitated was an unauthorised interference in

[1] Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, ii. 80, note.
[2] Thackeray, i. 160 f.

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military affairs, which concerned only the king and the military authorities. These arguments secured the defeat of the motion. It will be remembered how he had formerly demanded parliamentary control for every detail affecting the conduct of the war, though this control was a monarchical privilege in no less degree. We can hardly venture to say that his attitude was dictated by a change in his views; it is obvious that he was anxious to support his patrons.

On another occasion Pitt displayed an unusually pacific tendency with the object of saving the government from annoyance; this was somewhat remarkable in him, as he had formerly insisted upon a strict maintenance of England's rights. In the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the French, as every one knew, had contracted to dismantle the fortifications of Dunkirk, and the opposition now demanded that the papers upon this point should be laid before the House, that they might see whether the conditions had been properly carried out. Pitt rejected the proposal as inopportune;[1] it would be regarded as an affront by France, and would lead to a new war, which England at present was not in a position to undertake. He thus demanded that England, in view of her military weakness, should cease to insist upon the full performance of the conditions of peace. We can imagine the appellations which he would formerly have employed for a statesman who ventured such a proposal.

These, however, were actions entirely explicable by his membership of the government, and were inspired by no deeper motives. In the year 1750 more important questions arose for consideration, and brought new interests into play which we have now to consider. It will be remembered that Newcastle was not able to work with the different secretaries of state for foreign affairs with whom he was associated. They had all attempted to secure peace, while he cherished thoughts of a new military coalition. The office was now held by the Duke of Bedford, and though no political questions of capital importance were on foot, there was no lack of opportunity for difference of opinion. The chief point was that Bedford, in conjunction with Lord Sandwich, attempted to found a separate party, and to get the direction of affairs

[1] Thackeray, i. 170.

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into his own hands.[1] He showed an inclination to consult the wishes of the royal family, especially those of the Duke of Cumberland and the Princess Amelia, the brother and sister of the heir-apparent. Relying on their support, he proceeded to oppose his colleagues as opportunity arose, while his royal allies showed their disfavour to the old duke by excluding him from their courts and by similar petty affronts. Newcastle, therefore, determined to remove his enemy from office, and to place him in a less influential post,[2] a project to which the king assented in the summer of 1750 in the course of a stay in Hanover. Newcastle afterwards asserted that the idea originated with the king himself,[3] but it is likely that he was careful to make the suggestion. Victory thus appeared secure, and the duke began to consider which office would be most suitable for his defeated adversary; then the king suddenly declared, after returning to London and to the influence of his family, that he had not wished Bedford's removal to take place, except with Bedford's consent. Resolute action by the whole of the Pelham party might even now have secured the desired result, but Henry abandoned his brother, as he did not wish to lose the favour of Cumberland and Bedford or that of the king. Newcastle was thus defeated.

In this affair we find Pitt entirely on Newcastle's side. To Pitt the duke confided his plans, his cares, and his anxieties without reserve, and Pitt showed him full sympathy.[4] During the absence of the duke he negotiated with Pelham for the execution of this project. The harmony of their co-operation is not to be explained upon the ground of mere sympathy; their interests must have run upon parallel lines, and these in my opinion are not difficult to discover. Bedford, whom Newcastle wished to remove, was foreign secretary conjointly with the duke; for years Pitt had been aiming at office, and what more likely than that he should have assisted in the process of removal in order to secure the vacant position for himself? Newcastle must have held out this prospect before him. In a letter of September 20 he promised to represent

[1] Newcastle to Pelham, May 20, 1750: Newcastle Papers in *Chatham Papers*, i. 36, note. Cp. Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, ii. 128 f.
[2] *Chatham Papers*, i. 47 ff. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 55.
[4] Cp. their mutual correspondence, *Ibid.*, i. 31-56.

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to the king the zeal and the fervour which he had shown for the king's policy.[1] Moreover, the correspondence between the two men, where it does not refer to the Bedford affair, deals exclusively with foreign business. Pitt was accurately informed of all the negotiations carried on from Hanover. Other members, too, of the Pelham party kept him posted in foreign policy. Henry Pelham and Horace Walpole gave him immediate information of the Spanish treaty, though these were matters with which the military paymaster was not directly concerned. Pitt's hopes of succeeding Bedford are also indicated by the fact that, when he failed to gain the post upon Bedford's ultimate dismissal, he broke away from the Pelhams in disappointment.

Pitt's behaviour during this period is thus entirely plain. He expected from Newcastle promotion to a leading position, and therefore championed his policy even in cases where it did not correspond with his former principles; for this reason he had supported him, even when he turned against the two brothers. Bedford stood in his way, and therefore he demanded his removal.

A question of immediate importance was a proposed convention with Bavaria. Newcastle, in agreement with the king, wished to see the dignity of Emperor secured to the house of Austria, and therefore supported the candidature of the Archduke Joseph for the position of Roman Emperor. For this purpose the Bavarian vote was necessary, which Newcastle attempted to secure by making the payment of further subsidies conditional upon the compliance of Bavaria. If the elector was ready to meet their views, he was to receive £40,000 a year for six years, contributed chiefly by England, and to a smaller extent by Austria and Holland. The negotiations upon the point were concluded in August, and in the autumn it was possible to ask Parliament for the money.

Pitt had invariably shown his dislike to conventions with foreign princes on the basis of subsidy payment; he had opposed them for the reason that they seemed to him likely to contribute only to the advancement of Hanover; we have seen elsewhere that on this point he was mistaken. On this occasion he wished to support the duke, and his task was

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 47.

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facilitated by the fact that with the subsidy question was involved another matter, the importance of which he might easily exaggerate. He thus laid primary importance upon securing the imperial crown to the house of Austria, and it was from this point of view that he supported the proposal in the House of Commons on January 17, 1751.[1] On the other hand he declined, consistently with his former attitude, to listen to any further proposals for subsidy conventions, on which point he was in agreement with Horace Walpole, who wrote him a memorandum upon that subject.[2]

The other matter was the convention with Spain, which had been concluded by the English ambassador, Mr. Keene, in Madrid, and was intended to compose all points of difference that remained after the conclusion of peace. The terms of the treaty were by no means in accord with the views with which the war had been begun. Spain was left in possession of her right of search, and the *asiento* respecting the slave trade was not recognised; also the claims of the South Sea Company were unsatisfied. However, Pitt offered no objection. On the contrary he proceeded to defend the convention in the House of Commons,[3] asserting that it was reasonable, as a lengthy war had shown the earlier demands to be incapable of accomplishment. He declared that the loss of the company had been more than compensated by the gain from privateering, etc., during the war, that the *asiento* would soon expire, and was therefore of no particular value, and that the articles of the convention secured greater advantages to British trade than had been enjoyed for many years. The latter assertion was correct in so far as the length of the struggle had prevented British commerce from enjoying the privileges of which it was legally possessed. For that very reason the new agreement betokened a retrogression and a surrender of rights. The principle of no search was condemned by Pitt as incompatible with the existing body of international law. Referring to the famous address from the commons, which had formerly begged the king to make no peace with Spain except upon the surrender of that demand, he emphatically condemned the address as an unsuitable inter-

[1] Thackeray, i. 175.
[2] Coxe, *Memoirs of Horatio, Lord Walpole*, ii. 340 f. London, 1808.
[3] Thackeray, i. 175; Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, ii. 139.

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ference with the royal prerogative. As regards his own former attitude upon the question, he asserted that he was then a young man, but was now ten years older, had considered public affairs more coolly, and was convinced that the claim of no search could never be maintained unless Spain was so reduced as to consent to any terms her conqueror might think proper to impose. Pitt denied his former principles, but his right to do so upon this question must be admitted in view of the wide experience of the respective power of the several European states which he had been able to acquire during recent years. We must, however, be the more strongly impressed by the presumption with which he had formerly ventured to pronounce an opinion upon such difficult questions, and to condemn the action of those who dealt with them. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that both formerly and now his action was strongly influenced and perhaps decided by personal interests.

Upon all these questions Pitt supported the Pelhams, and it was largely due to him that the government measures were carried, while those of the opposition were thrown out. There was no obvious disruption in the party. Another matter, however, came up for consideration, which brought about a difference of opinion between Pitt and the Pelhams, and forced Pitt to show his colours. As early as November 1749 Pelham had proposed to reduce the number of the navy crews from ten thousand to eight thousand men, while Newcastle wished to see the higher figure retained.[1] The opposition declared against the motion, and proposed instead a decrease in the army, which, they said, could only be serviceable to the cause of despotism, while the fleet was the most necessary defence of the kingdom. The proposal of the opposition was rejected at the time, but the main question was not settled. Now, in January 1751, Lord Barrington again introduced the motion,[2] in accordance with Pelham's policy, basing his action upon the assertion that there was no longer any fear of piracy, and therefore no further need of ships of war for India. Pelham defended the motion, as did Fox, who remained upon his side during the difference between the brothers. Pitt, on the other hand, supported Newcastle's proposal. He argued against

[1] Coxe, *Pelham Administration*, ii. 93 f.
[2] For the following cp. *Ibid.*, ii. 141 ff.

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Pelham's policy with apparent reluctance and regret, asserting that he had been forced into this attitude by his fear of Jacobitism, and that upon this one point he was obliged to disagree with those whose career he had determined to make his own. He said that the fleet was England's standing army, and that the land army might be of smaller numbers, for lack of numbers was compensated by perfection of discipline. This action was in opposition to his assertions at an earlier period, when he had poured scorn upon the forces of Jacobitism, and rejected the means proposed to increase the navy. The attitude he had adopted provoked warm attacks. A member of the ministerial party, Mr. Hampden, reproached him and others for using their eloquence to secure lucrative offices. At that point, however, an extraordinary change began. Pelham, whom Pitt had pointed out as his opponent, did not wish to see the government party broken up, proceeded himself to defend the arguments of his adversary, disapproving of the zeal with which Hampden had represented his case, and attempted to justify Pitt's action. Further, the affair plainly revealed the split in the ministerial ranks, and everybody expected Pitt to secede, and either form a separate alliance with Newcastle, or join the opposition. Though Pelham had openly shown a friendly feeling for Pitt, he felt himself deeply wounded by his behaviour, while Newcastle sternly forbade his followers to take any share in the persecutions to which Pitt was now naturally exposed.

The opposition, and especially the prince, whose political importance became more obvious, naturally benefited by this tension in the ministerial ranks. Newcastle and Pitt cannot have failed to recognise this fact; yet they did nothing to diminish the existing friction, and this no doubt for special reasons. Newcastle had been deceived by the king in the Bedford affair, had been treated with a lack of respect by the king's favourite son and daughter, and felt his position at court growing steadily weaker; it was therefore only common prudence for him to make his way to the younger court, to which the sceptre might descend at any moment. He could not venture to break with the existing government, for nobody could guarantee the immediate occurrence of a change of rulers, but it would be just as well not to be too closely allied with those who enjoyed most of the king's favour. The tie of

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union must be so slackened that it could at any moment be dissolved and some new connection be begun. At no moment did the cautious duke lose sight of the possibility of a change of monarchs. Whether Pitt shared these views cannot be determined from his correspondence, but the possibility was one to which he had conformed his action from the outset of his career, and we may certainly assume that it now formed part of his calculations. He determined to follow Newcastle's lead, in the conviction that the duke's considerable and independent power would carry him over all obstacles. Then, however, an event took place, which neither of these politicians could possibly have foreseen.

At this time the prince's court was a little world standing apart, a state, as it were, of the future, which had been set up in view of the immediate prospect of Frederick's accession. Lists of officials were composed, after formal discussion, peerages were conferred by anticipation, and the policy was entirely determined which was to be put in action against the existing government upon the king's death. Among the court officials we find Bubb Dodington and Lord Bute, who had been appointed lord of the bedchamber on October 16, though he was already one of the prince's following. The good health of the heir-apparent seemed to leave no room for doubt that he would outlive his father by many years. On March 6, 1751, he suddenly fell ill, the consequence, it is said, of a blow from a ball which had struck him in the stomach a considerable time previously. Internal inflammation declared itself, which the doctors attempted to relieve by bleeding, and at the moment when it was thought possible to announce an improvement in the patient, he suddenly died on the evening of March 20. This stupefying blow, which shattered an infinite number of political combinations, was not without importance upon Pitt's career; it became the occasion of a change of course, which was to lead him an unexpectedly long distance from his objective.

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SECTION IV

RESIGNATION AND PREPARATION

CHAPTER XIII

QUIET YEARS

By the death of the prince Pitt lost his former patron and friend. In recent years both men, indeed, had been somewhat alienated. With the object of gaining a responsible and lucrative position Pitt had joined the court party, and had laid claim to cabinet office; he had even ventured to desert his political principles, and in many cases to embark upon an opposite course, while the whole of his oratorical power was employed to cover or to justify his behaviour. In this way he had fallen into opposition with the prince, who had gathered his forces for a more vigorous attack. But it was an opposition by no means so pronounced as that in which he invariably stood towards the king; of the leading politicians, he had given his support as a whole to the man from whom he might hope for immediate promotion under existing circumstances, and who, in the event of a change of rulers, might safely guide him to the new monarch's side. Pitt thus thought himself comparatively secure against any contingency, and, with Newcastle's help, he regarded the attainment of a cabinet seat as an immediate possibility. The situation seemed but little changed by the death of the prince; his position in the existing government and his relation to its component parts was what it had been, and his desire to propitiate the deceased prince was now transferred to his legal successor, that is to say, to the regent, as the present heir-apparent, Prince George, was still a minor. Pitt's calculations were falsified, not so

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much by the unexpected death of the prince, or by the action of his immediate friends and party companions, as chiefly by the fact that he had entirely failed to fathom the duke's intentions.

After the death of the prince the Leicester House party was entirely broken up.[1] The princess had no inclination to continue party intrigue on her own initiative, and after her shattering loss began to lean for support upon the king. Without his favour it was indeed impossible to secure any satisfactory arrangement of her affairs. The king received her graciously, and showed a disposition to meet her wishes; he arranged her household as she desired, though upon financial matters he proved characteristically intractable. She received, indeed, an independent appanage of £50,000; but no provision was made for the prince's debts, and many sources of income which she had hoped to enjoy were appropriated henceforward to the king.[2] Hence she felt few pricks of conscience somewhat later, when she began the organisation of an opposition party.

Some of the prince's adherents attempted to preserve the unity of their party with the object of wresting concessions from the ministry by a determined attitude. They thought that the Pelhams would probably need their support against the Bedford group. The prince, however, had found it difficult to prevent dissension within the party, and the task was now absolutely impossible, the more so as the princess had capitulated unconditionally. The several members were unable to agree, and every one went his own way, the majority concluding separate treaties of peace with the government.

The first and most important question raised by the new situation was that of the regency. Prince George was only twelve years old, and it was therefore probable that the regent appointed would have the government in his hands for a considerable time. Thus, whereas party struggles had formerly raged only about ministerial posts, the royal power itself was now the point at issue. As a matter of fact only two possible candidates appeared, who were also the next in succession to the throne, the Princess of Wales and the Duke of Cumberland, but their relations were by no means friendly, and it was difficult to come to a decision. The king would

[1] Cp. Mahon, iv. 11.

[2] Dodington, p. 168.

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have liked to entrust the regency to his favourite son, but the nation as a whole objected to him. His military bearing and prestige, and the severity he had displayed in Scotland, gave him the reputation of one who would follow the methods of absolutism.[1] Moreover, his relations with Newcastle were strained, as we have already seen. It was not to be expected that the duke would disregard public opinion merely to secure the advancement of his adversary, and without Newcastle the king could do nothing. Cumberland's regency was thus out of the question from the beginning. The only remaining problem was whether the princess should be given complete or limited monarchical power. The nation had no objection to her, for she had always shown great tact, and had aroused no hostility, but the complete exclusion of the duke would have greatly wounded the king. The ministry then arranged that the princess should be declared regent, and be supported by a council of regency, at the head of which should be the king's son. Upon these lines a bill was drawn up, which was submitted to both Houses for approval at the beginning of May 1751.[2]

The bill passed through the House of Lords without difficulty, in spite of the opposition of certain members, including the Duke of Bedford; some opposed it because the Duke of Cumberland seemed to be badly treated, others objected to the limitation of the princess's powers. In the House of Commons a keen debate arose, in the course of which vigorous attacks were made upon the council of regency. A mass of arguments derived from historical theory and practice were brought forward, but the fundamental reason for opposition was not directly expressed; this was the general dislike to the duke, whose ambition and hostility to the princess aroused universal apprehension. Among the opponents were Thomas Pitt of Boconnock and Richard, Lord Cobham. The former had been obliged to resign his office as warden of the Stannaries, which he held under the prince, to one of the king's favourites, Lord Waldegrave, and was therefore inclined to opposition; moreover, as an old adherent of the prince, he objected to any limitation upon the powers of his widow.

[1] *Memoirs of Earl Waldegrave*, p. 22. London, 1821.

[2] The most detailed account of the discussions in Parliament is contained in Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.*, vol. i. chap. v.

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The latter, who held no office, and was thus not bound to the government, expressed the hostility entertained by the Temple family and his friend Pitt to Cumberland.

It was difficult for Pitt to decide upon his attitude. As a member of the government he could not oppose the ministerial line of action. On the other hand, he knew that his patron, the Duke of Newcastle, objected to Cumberland, and he was therefore obliged to be careful that in supporting the proposed regency council, to which his friend Cobham objected, he did not express a preference for the presidency of the duke. He therefore proposed, while agreeing to the regency council, to strike a definite blow at the duke, and this difficult task was performed in masterly fashion. He declared that he wished to see the council appointed in order that if the princess became regent with unlimited powers, and died before the expiration of her regency, it might be impossible for a new regent to demand complete power upon the strength of his presidential seat; for in that case some high personality or other (obviously a reference to Cumberland) would be induced by his sole possession of the regency to think less of securing than of wearing the crown. This was a keen thrust, which cannot have failed of its effect. Upon other points Pitt spoke in a style which reminds us of his maiden speech of 1736. He eulogised the deceased prince with the ominous expression 'most patriot prince,' which must have aroused lively recollections of his opposition to the king, and he then proceeded to express his admiration of the king, whose power of bearing so heavy a sorrow far surpassed that which Edward III. had shown upon the death of the Black Prince. In conclusion he added that the council might prove a considerable help to the princess-regent; should the council place difficulties in her way, she need only refer to Parliament, and an address would be delivered to her which would help her to surmount all obstacles, and such a proposal he was ready to support in any case.

This speech, and especially the passage which referred to Cumberland, no doubt excited the Duke of Newcastle's approval in a high degree, to a greater extent, indeed, than Pitt could himself imagine; the duke's opponent had received a keen thrust without any risk to the duke himself, while Pitt had naturally again incurred the anger of the king, not merely for

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the insult to his favourite son, but also for his observations upon the deceased prince and the king himself, which could only be interpreted in a sarcastic sense. Pitt had referred in unmistakable terms to the opposition between father and son, and had then proceeded to exaggerate the father's fortitude upon his son's death; these expressions, whatever their real meaning, could only be interpreted in the sense that he was reproaching the father for the satisfaction and perhaps the joy he had shown at his son's death. The bitter vexation which the king must have experienced was exactly what Newcastle wanted; it was now much more difficult for him to fulfil Pitt's wishes, and, as we shall see, he no longer entertained any intention of fulfilling them. The old gentleman must have been completely delighted at seeing his over-confident adherent thus voluntarily playing into his hands. Pitt was guilty of a miscalculation. He thought he was laying Newcastle under an obligation, and thus securing his own advancement and protection, by which he would obtain the long-desired cabinet office upon the next opportunity. These hopes seemed to be guaranteed by the stronger position which the Pelham ministry had acquired in virtue of these recent events, even if the king's personal aversion had grown equally strong. Pitt may have counted upon a repetition of the resignation scene of 1746. But it was to appear that upon this occasion Newcastle proposed to dispense with his services. Upon one point only Pitt had not been entirely mistaken. The laudatory terms in which he had spoken of the Princess of Wales might be of advantage to him hereafter if the princess became regent, or her influence or that of her son became an important factor in political life.

Newcastle's immediate object was to get rid of Bedford. The opportunity now seemed more favourable than before; the third factor, the Leicester House party, no longer existed, and in the event of a duel the superiority of the Pelhams could not be doubted. The important point was to carry out the change as delicately as possible, and to prevent any feeling of undue irritation in Bedford's party. Hence, immediately upon the conclusion of the session, Lord Sandwich was relieved of office; he had been first lord of the admiralty and in close connection with Bedford. It was obvious that Bedford would not permit this change, and in fact two days afterwards,

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on June 14, 1751, he placed his seals in the king's hands. This was the first consequence of the prince's death; the Pelham government had thrown off the undisciplined element and consolidated its power to an extent that had never before been possible.

Hitherto Pitt had been satisfied with his patron; the programme had been accurately carried out. Now, however, came a bitter disappointment; the post of secretary of state for the south was not handed to him, but to Lord Holderness, a tractable and compliant character from whom Newcastle need fear no inconvenient interference. Any thoughts of Pitt's advancement which the duke had previously entertained had entirely disappeared under the stress of altered circumstances. Pitt was too confident and too full of independent ideas; he was likely to overshadow the duke as Carteret had formerly done, especially if he succeeded in gaining the king's ear and making himself indispensable. On the other side, if Pitt in his disappointment declared war, there was nothing to be feared for the moment, as there was no opposition party of any kind which he could join; his popularity had suffered severely from his long connection with the Pelhams, and his surrender of the principles which he had formerly defended. It was to be expected that Pitt would refrain from expressing his dissatisfaction too strongly, as he would thus have exposed himself to the danger of losing the lucrative office which he held, without getting any corresponding advantage in return. The only personality whom the Pelhams found it necessary to consider was the king, whose consent to the proposed arrangement was indispensable, and who was alone capable of offering an inconvenient and possibly dangerous opposition. Hence they proceeded to satisfy the king by recalling his old friend Lord Granville to the cabinet, though not to a post where he would be able to acquire any real power. He received an honourable position as President of the Council, which he occupied until his death. A life free from pecuniary cares had made him a very compliant character, and he had ceased to aim at supreme power.[1]

For Pitt now began the most peaceful period of his life, which lasted until 1754. Newcastle had calculated correctly when he refused him the office he desired; Pitt was indeed

[1] Mahon, iv. 18.

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angry at his deception, but he made no attempt to vent his vexation in definite opposition.[1] He spent the following years in complete silence, occupied only with the routine work of his office, with study, pleasure, and the care of his health. Only upon one occasion, as far as we know, did he take part in the parliamentary debates, upon the discussion of a law to deal with the Jews.[2] In the spring of 1752 the ministry had passed a bill permitting the naturalisation of Jews under certain circumstances. The national displeasure, however, obliged the government so early as November of the same year to repeal the measure, and at this point Pitt appeared to defend it. The question which then impelled him to express his opinion was little concerned with politics. If he spoke on this occasion against the Jews, because he considered that the favours shown to them were inconsistent with the restrictions laid upon many Christian corporations, he soon came forward in their defence, when this consideration was no longer part of the question. The opponents of the Jews went even further, and demanded the repeal of a statute which conferred citizen rights upon Jews in the colonies after a residence of seven years. Here again Pitt could not agree, but supported Henry Pelham in opposing the motion, which was then rejected.

While Pitt avoided participation in parliamentary conflicts, in order not to support those who he felt had wounded him, his influence had not entirely disappeared. He followed the practice of Bolingbroke, who, though not even a member of the House, influenced Parliament through his mouthpieces and secured consideration for his ideas. Nearly all of Pitt's friends were in his own situation. Lyttelton, George and James Grenville held state offices, and were therefore not independent of the government. One member of the party was without office, namely Richard, Lord Cobham, or, as he was known after October 18, 1752, when his mother died, Lord Temple. He continued the traditions of his uncle, Viscount Cobham, whose great wealth he had inherited, by uniting, helping, and when necessary supporting[3] the associated relatives, with the sole difference that Pitt's brain supplied the main ideas of action. It was Temple also who

[1] Coxe, *Horace Walpole*, ii. 356 f.; Dodington, p. 181.
[2] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 444.
[3] Dodington, p. 181.

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used his independence to propound Pitt's opposition views,[1] which in the main he shared, though he was unable to bring these forward in the House of Commons after his elevation to the peerage.

The connection between the two men is well illustrated by the question of the subsidies to Saxony. We have seen that Pitt formerly agreed with Newcastle upon the payment of a subsidy to the Elector of Bavaria to secure his vote, and that he had even spoken in the House in support of the proposal. This policy was now continued, and the Elector of Saxony was promised £32,000 for four years for a similar purpose. Meanwhile, however, Pitt had changed his attitude as a result of the rebuff he had received. When the old Horace Walpole sent him the outline of a speech in which he opposed the continuance of the policy of subsidies, Pitt concealed his attitude by a reply which was somewhat involved, though in apparent agreement. 'If your endeavours,' he wrote, 'contribute to the honest end you aim at, namely to check foreign expenses and prevent entanglements abroad, you will deserve the thanks of this generation, and will have those of the next.' This passage does not decide the question whether Pitt regarded Walpole's means as likely to effect their object, and only admitted the desirability of the object itself, which no one could deny. In my opinion his old views are hidden behind his words; he practically observes that it would be an excellent thing if by refusing these subsidies an end of the expenditure and entanglements could be made, but such a procedure is irrational, for in view of the scanty means at hand an avaricious policy will not produce a lasting peace, and expenses will only increase. Pitt, however, did not wish to give open expression to these views, otherwise he would have frankly informed Walpole that he was anxious by a show of agreement to give a real support to the opposition against the minister he hated, without laying himself open to the charge of inconsistency or of hostility to the government. That he really wished to see the subsidy question opposed, although he regarded it as expedient, is obvious from the behaviour of his friend Cobham, who vigorously attacked the motion for subsidies on January 22, 1752, and reduced the minority of his party to fifty-four votes.

[1] Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.*, i. 241.

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Pitt's double-faced behaviour certainly does not lay him open to the charge of preferring personal interests to the welfare of the state, or supporting measures which he knew to be injurious. This is not the case in so far as he knew that the proposals he favoured would not be accepted, and that the state would therefore suffer no loss. Hence he could calmly turn their every action to the disadvantage of his political opponents, as he had done before. If he ever came to power himself he would be able to find means to represent similar transactions in a different light. His early action under Walpole in this matter had been far more serious, as it strengthened the hands of the opposition group within the ministry, which was able to throw obstacles in the way of the government, but at that time Pitt was more under the influence of honourable conviction.

Of Pitt's official work we hear practically nothing in these years, nor can it have been particularly interesting. The privy council was suddenly summoned in the year 1752 during the king's absence, and Pitt also received an express order from the regency council, which was meeting at this time, to be present at their sessions as long as he was in London, and, in the event of his departure, to inform the secretaries.[1] Whether he was thus summoned in this year alone we cannot say. At any rate it is somewhat striking that a summons of the kind belongs only to that year in which Pitt had begun to stand aloof from politics, though the regency met every year when the king went to Hanover.

As Pitt's leisure had now increased, he was in the habit of staying outside London to a greater extent, either upon visits to friends or occupied in the care of his health.[2] He seems to have made an unusually energetic attack upon the gout, for we find him staying at Bath from the beginning of every autumn until late in the winter, and in 1754 his stay was continued until the spring. The success of his efforts, however, was uncertain and variable. Accounts of comparatively good health are immediately followed by news of relapses. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that these reports were occasionally coloured by political considerations; at any rate

[1] Chatham MSS.

[2] *Chatham Papers*, i. 62 ff.; *Grenville Papers*, i. 99, 103 ff.; Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 448 ff.

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such considerations may have had weight in the year 1754. Before betaking himself to Bath Pitt was accustomed to stay with his different friends, chiefly at Wotton, Stowe, and Hagley, places which deserve a special mention.[1]

Wotton was an estate in Buckinghamshire, to the west of Aylesbury and north-east of Oxford, belonging to the Grenville family, and occupied by the brothers and sisters of the Cobham-Temple family. It embraced part of the wide and well-watered valley of Aylesbury, the natural beauties of which had been increased by landscape gardening upon a large scale. The art of landscape gardening had been stimulated by the increase of large estates and by the general influx of wealth, and was now at a high pitch of development. In the case of Wotton it had been especially successful in laying out romantic scenery and in making skilful use of existing watercourses. The extensive park was divided into four parts of wholly different character, so that a new and invariably beautiful view of its kind was afforded to the visitor; it was a magnificent spot for the refreshment of weary statesmen, while it invited the expression of mutual affection.

More imposing, perhaps, but of a different character was the seat of Stowe, situated almost to the north of Wotton, formerly the property of Viscount Cobham, and now in possession of Richard, Lord Temple. Art was here manifested not only as subjugating nature, but also as adding attractions of its own in due subordination to the general character of the scenery. In accordance with the prevailing fashion, temples in antique style, decorated within or without with colonnades, were everywhere to be found upon heights and at the end of vistas. Upon Elysian fields arose the sanctuaries of ancient virtue and of British fame, and at other points stood temples to friendship, unity, and triumph. Among these memorials Pitt was hereafter to find a well-deserved place. Artistic gates admitted to the different parts of the park, and by the temple of virtue arose a pillar decorated with a ship's beak, in memory of Thomas, the youngest brother of the Grenvilles, a sea-captain killed in the fight of May 3, 1747. It was in these splendid gardens that Pitt had so often walked in converse and counsel with his patrons, the Prince of Wales and Viscount Cobham, and his visits were

[1] *Observations on Modern Gardening*, 1793, pp. 86 ff., 198 f., 217 ff.

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now gladly renewed after the estate had become the property of his best friend.

In a different part of the country, further to the north-west and near the river Severn, in the county of Worcester, lay Hagley, the seat of the Lyttelton family. A visit to friends in this quarter took Pitt considerably out of the direct route to Bath, but he was seen at Hagley from time to time. The house lies at the foot of a range of hills which are partly enclosed by the precincts of the park, and decorated with a portico and an obelisk, from whence a wide view may be obtained over the surrounding country, including the manufacturing town of Stourbridge and the distant ruins of Dudley Castle.

These were the resorts in which we must conceive Pitt as spending some weeks or months every year, occupied with conversation, hunting, and in stimulating reading with his friends. To these estates must also be added Holte, Legge's country seat in Hants,[1] and also Encombe, the property of his cousin, John Pitt. When Pitt himself was not occupied in London, or visiting Bath, he usually lived at his own house, South Lodge, the gardens of which he seems to have laid out in imitation of Stowe, though upon a smaller scale. A temple of Pan gave his grounds the favourite antique touch.[2] In the summer of 1753 he made a tour through Sussex and visited the battlefield of Hastings.[3]

It is no mere coincidence that to this period of repose and expectation belongs the correspondence with his young nephew Thomas, the eldest son of Thomas Pitt of Boconnock, to which we have already referred, and whence we have drawn materials for this history.[4] Pitt had now sufficient leisure time to act as tutor to the young, and the rich experience he had gathered in the course of his career made him feel the necessity of becoming a mentor to beginners upon the path of life. It was somewhat abnormal that at the age of more than forty years he should have no family of his own, and none of those educational responsibilities which are necessary for the general development of a man's intellect and character. In his case the deficiency was more deeply felt, as he was by nature inclined to take a strong interest in the education of the young. He

[1] Legge to Pitt, Chatham MSS.
[2] *Observations on Modern Gardening.*
[3] Lady Chatterton, *Memorials*, i. 61.
[4] Cp. p. 80 ff.

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had all the intellectual power, the strength of character and moral force which compel obedience and respect, and, notwithstanding the disappointments of his public life, he preserved a kindliness of disposition which secured him affection and confidence. Young men came to rely upon him with trust and enthusiasm, as we can see in the case of James Grenville, his beloved 'Jemmy,' and that of Thomas Pitt, and to an even greater extent in the case of his own children at a later date. He was thus no doubt ready to seize any opportunity for occupation of the kind, and at this particular time there was no obstacle to friendly intercourse with his brother and his family. The friction between the brothers must at one time have been considerable, as indeed we learn from Shelburne's narrative.[1] They had represented different policies and fought on the side of opposition parties. But this period had now come to an end. Thomas was obliged to content himself with the part of onlooker, and was no doubt glad to see his son noticed by a relation who held a government post. He was no longer secure of his own constituencies since the death of the prince, and even during his lifetime difficulties had arisen upon this subject. Hence he would have raised no obstacle to the close association of the young Thomas, whose talents he was himself unable to develop, with his uncle. The occasion of the opening of their correspondence was the entry of Thomas at the university of Cambridge. During the important period of student life he needed experienced counsel, not only with reference to his studies, but also upon his mode of conduct as a whole. Naturally it is not impossible, but indeed probable, that Pitt had previously kept an eye upon his nephew and helped him with advice.

His letters were before now of importance to us as offering the possibility of gaining some information upon Pitt's own studies, and conclusions derived from this source have high probability. Here again they are valuable as providing us with information upon his intellectual life, which naturally cannot be derived from his public appearances or his correspondence. He is attempting from pure disinterestedness to form the character of a pupil whom he desired to see following his own footsteps, and the lines of progress which he marked out were doubtless those which he had himself pursued. It

[1] Cp. p. 97.

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must be said that our information upon these points is not extensive, for the letters are chiefly concerned with advice upon the nephew's course of study, but mention may be made of one important point.

In the discussion of his treatise upon superstition we formerly had occasion to examine the religious views which Pitt held in his youth, and to define his position with reference to the Christian faith. The source of information, however, which we then discussed, was the outpouring of an immature mind, and was composed to some extent with a view to self-advertisement. The ideas which he then formulated cannot have remained unchanged throughout his manhood, and the question therefore arises, at what date and in what direction Pitt's views upon these questions were modified. As a matter of fact we find that upon the whole he clung to the opinions which he had then enounced; this fact does not prove that his powers were then so matured as to enable him to formulate principles incapable of further development, even by continuous mental effort, but rather that in later years he was but little and only superficially occupied with such questions. Apart from the belief in an over-ruling providence, his religion is principally ethical,[1] and he presupposes every man in possession of full knowledge of moral principles; he continues to assume a natural and original purity of human character disturbed only by bad example, by errors of practice, and destructive teaching. The proper attitude towards God is based by him upon ethical grounds; he takes as his starting-point the gratitude which is paid to every human benefactor, and ought therefore to be shown to God in a far higher degree; to be ungrateful is to be guilty of immorality. If, however, it be asked what Pitt understood by his phrase 'a right attitude towards God,' we are brought back to the claims of moral behaviour, for it is to this point that he attempts to lead his nephew by a long series of deductions. He was to be secured against the enticements of companions who might persuade him to abandon his faith and seduce him to extravagance of life. Thus Pitt, in a certain sense, argues in a circle. A moral imperative, the command of gratitude, is the basis of a right attitude towards God, and this attitude

[1] The most conclusive passage dealing with Pitt's views upon this subject is in the *Chatham Papers*, i. 73 ff.

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again consists of moral action which must include gratitude. Thus Pitt's religion implies a heart inspired by charity to God and man. He thus fails to perceive that he is adopting the standpoint, if not of heathen philosophy, of Old Testament law, which can only find its justification as a subordinate element in the far more comprehensive teaching of Christianity. He failed to grasp the essence of Christian doctrine, the redemption, and spiritual communion with God, which is the only source of true Christian morality; to this an intellectual system of ethics is related like the shadow to the object which casts it. These essential points, including the dogmas of belief and the acts of religious performance, seem to him mere superstition and are to be rejected with contempt. His ideal was not that enthusiasm, under which form the ardent life of devotion of a true believer appeared to him, but an unambitious attempt to do right; he valued not the subtle speculations of dogmatic theology, but an active vital principle of belief, under which he understood, as appears from the details which he gives, justice, nobility, and honour. This was a basis which certainly raised Pitt high above many, perhaps above most, of his contemporaries, with whom honest belief or morality were more or less negative qualities. Pitt possesses the fruits, though torn away from the stem and somewhat withered by the separation, whereas even this had been cast away by others. As regards his public life, this attitude towards religious faith was rather disadvantageous than profitable. He did not possess the spiritual confidence which finds the right path in every difficulty, and which might have made him independent of all considerations of immediate profit, and of the varying judgment of mankind; this would have been to him a sure resource and a certain source of confidence, and therefore an invaluable help in his development to real greatness. On the other hand his religious views saved him from abandonment to that ruthless selfishness which, when freed from all bonds of morality, rises rapidly, if not to greatness, yet to high position and to fame. Pitt owed his ultimate elevation chiefly to his talents and strength of will, and to certain favourable turns of fortune; but it must be said that the process was extremely slow.

Pitt's literary occupations during these years, which preceded his career as a great statesman, are partially revealed to

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us by a number of booksellers' accounts,[1] covering the years 1753-5, which give us information upon his purchases. Here we find mention of the works which he recommended to his nephew, and which he had therefore probably read at an earlier period; there are also a number of other books, either amusing or generally instructive, or useful as a preparation for his ministerial career. In the year 1753 we find him with a folio copy of the Bible, then a work upon Cicero, a copy of *Don Quixote*, a *Defence of Gambling*, and a few philosophical writings. In 1754 he bought Birch's *Memoirs of Queen Elizabeth*, May's *History of the Parliament*, the Works of Racine, and Hume's *History of England*, so that at that time he would seem to have been extending his historical knowledge. In 1755 the number of his purchases considerably increased, the most important items being Labat, *Voyage en Amérique*, *Ludlow's Memoirs*, *Négotiations par le Comte d'Avaux*, *Histoire des Antilles*, some dictionaries, *Angeloni's Letters*, *Considérations sur les Arts*, Voltaire's *Histoire d'Allemagne*, *State of North America*, Colden's *Indian Nations*, Grotius' *De jure belli ac pacis*, *Traité d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, and Horne's *Mirror of Justice*. Thus we see that continental events, the impending war, and his prospects of guiding the conduct of the war stimulated him to the zealous study of such works as might be useful to him. The catalogue of books thus corresponds in some degree to the changes of his life during the period which we shall have to examine further.

In these years must be placed the foundation of the new political party, which was soon to attain greater importance and strength, and to influence Pitt's rise to power; this was the young Leicester House party, and the necessity for its formation gradually became obvious to the princess and her friends. Bedford's retirement had not improved the prospects of a reorganised opposition, at any rate not of a party which could be useful to the princess. Bedford remained faithful to Cumberland, her opponent, and when he had given vent to the first outburst of anger, his relations with the Pelhams improved, as he saw the hopelessness of any resistance. Hence the main object of the princess was not so much to throw difficulties in the way of the existing ministry as to make preparations for the future.

[1] Chatham MSS.

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She was perhaps mistaken in allowing the regency bill to pass without raising objections. Had it been tactfully represented to the king that the bill, with its regency council, aimed at raising a ministerial power above that of the Crown, and was likely to produce such result, the king would possibly have declared against it, and the friends of the princess and the secret enemies of the Pelhams would have been able to raise their voices in opposition without fear of the consequences. The princess, however, declined opposition,[1] and it was impossible to make any serious efforts on her behalf. It remained to make the best dispositions of which the existing situation permitted. The future princess-regent had no definite objection to the present ministry as such, and provided that she was secured in the enjoyment of the full powers of the Crown, she would have been content to see the ministry retained. But provision had been made for her to act in co-operation with a council formed of these same ministers, and led by her opponent, the Duke of Cumberland, and it was therefore to be expected that, if she secured no other support, she would soon see the real power wrested from her hands. Hence her efforts were necessarily directed to forming a loyal and influential party of parliamentary adherents, not with the object of raising opposition at the moment, but to secure her position for the future.

The intellectual chief of the old party of the Prince of Wales, Lord Bolingbroke, was dead. He had succumbed to cancer on December 12, 1751, just at the moment when all prospect of the realisation of his theories had disappeared with the death of the prince and the dissolution of his party. There were, however, others upon whom the princess could count; among these was Bubb Dodington, whose diary we still possess. He had made vain attempts to secure a government connection, and now occupied himself exclusively with the affairs of the princess. His notes must be subjected to some criticism in view of his tendency to exaggerate the importance of his own influence, but it cannot be denied that he played a certain part in the formation of the Leicester House party, and largely stimulated its organisation. On October 15 we find the first detailed conversation on the point between the princess and Dodington, which stated and recog-

[1] Dodington, p. 164 ff.

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nised the necessity of securing some support, and of looking about for friends. Other conversations followed, in which the same subject was discussed, though no definite agreement or conclusion was arrived at. At the same time the ministers began to interfere in the education of the heir-apparent, and to claim the right of appointing and controlling his masters and tutors, and the friction consequent upon their action brought in new adherents to the court of the princess.[1] It was this reaction which raised Lord Bute to importance and prestige. He had succeeded more than any one else in winning the favour of the princess, and soon became the representative of the young court as a new and rising power, which no one could afford to disregard.

In one of these conversations of Dodington,[2] on this occasion with Lord Hillsborough, an exhaustive discussion was devoted to Pitt and his group, with the object of discovering whether they could be expected to revolt against the ministry. It was admitted that they were by no means in harmony with the government, and that Pitt, who was swayed by motives of ambition and not of greed, was well able to sacrifice his high salary, the more so as Lord Temple's purse was always open to the interests of his friends; it was also asserted that Pitt had no prospects of advancement under the existing system, from which he should be quite ready to secede. But attempts at revolt were regarded as useless, unless Pitt succeeded in recovering his lost popularity, and joining hands with the nation in the struggle against the government. A transformation of the situation by the action of the Temple group was thus left out of calculation, but it is quite likely that they had been regarded as a possible nucleus of the new organisation. In any case Pitt must have conceived the opinion that some prospect stood open to him in this direction, a view which was strengthened by the action of the princess, who inquired after his health when he was suffering greatly at Bath in the winter of 1753-4.[3] He attached great importance to this action, and we shall find that he paid special attention henceforward to the interests of the future princess-regent.

[1] Cp. Almon, *Anecdotes*, p. 189 ff. Though his details are open to criticism, his general account of the movement is correct.

[2] Dodington, p. 181 f.

[3] *Grenville Papers*, i. 111.

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Any idea that no changes were to be expected for a considerable period proved entirely false. Henry Pelham, who was sixty years of age, enjoyed complete health, and seemed, like the late prince, to be assured of a long life. But in the summer of 1753 he was attacked by a serious stomachic disorder, caused by his excessive fondness for good living. In the winter he seemed so far recovered as to be out of serious danger; but on March 3 he was again attacked by the disease, which carried him off within three days, on March 6.

This event created great excitement in every quarter. King George is said to have exclaimed, 'Now I shall have no more peace.' It was a severe blow for Newcastle, and no doubt he felt it deeply, but his thoughts were soon absorbed in the changes which must be made in the organisation of the ministry. All who could be affected by the forthcoming changes set vigorously to work to gain or to improve their respective chances. Two hours after Pelham's death Henry Fox started out at eight o'clock in the morning to pay visits in search of information. Two offices were at stake which had become vacant by the minister's death, the first lordship of the treasury and the chancellorship of the exchequer. The latter post, a fact characteristic of plutocratic England, was regarded as the highest office of state, as its occupant had the conduct of financial affairs in his hands, while the first lord of the treasury enjoyed less importance, as he was concerned only with the conduct of the exchequer. Though these two offices had been held jointly by Pelham, it was clear that they would now be separated. Speculation exhausted its powers in attempting to discover to whom they would fall; there seemed only three possible candidates for the highest post, Fox, Pitt, and Murray, who had all acquired reputation, not so much by the extent of their following, as by their power of effective parliamentary action. These expectations were disappointed. Not one of the three was to gain the prize, for Newcastle's ideas were moving in an entirely different direction.

For a full understanding of the result of this affair, and of subsequent events, two points are of importance: on the one hand, the point of view from which the duke treated the question of distributing these posts, and on the other the objects which Pitt placed before himself on this occasion. To these matters our immediate attention must be directed.

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The duke was especially anxious to maintain intact the existing system, which had indeed been strongly consolidated only recently, though such considerations did not exclude the possibility of introducing new elements. On the other hand, it was impossible for him to entrust the first office of the state to another personality, whether he belonged to the government or not, and thus to reintroduce a division of authority. The situation had been possible while his brother was in office, as brotherly confidence relieved the tension and secured a compromise upon disputed points; but even so, inconvenience had arisen. Newcastle could not afford to repeat this action unless he wished to find himself in a subordinate position, a prospect which had not the smallest attraction for him. Nor, again, did he wish to surround himself with politicians of undue importance, who might use any opportunity for wresting the power from his hands. He had already undergone unpleasant experiences enough of this nature, for from the outset of the Pelham government to the time of Bedford's resignation, the secretaries of state had been constantly at variance. We know what was the duke's position with regard to Pitt, and it had remained unchanged by recent events. It was a somewhat ungrateful business again to cheat the hopes of his faithful adherent, and the matter therefore required very tactful handling.

An examination of Pitt's motives will show that he had strong hopes of cabinet office, and notwithstanding the disappointment he had experienced, thought it possible that he might rise with Newcastle's help. He counted, however, less upon the duke's goodwill than upon the fear inspired by his opponents at court, through whom it might be possible to force the duke and his associates to make the required concession. On the other hand, Pitt did not wish to surrender the office which he held, or to produce any friction in case his hopes were not realised. Hence his desires could not take the shape of a demand, and could not be accompanied by threats. His programme, as he repeatedly insisted, was to support the existing government loyally during the king's lifetime, and upon his death to join the forces of the princess-regent. This was the possibility which we saw discussed between Dodington and the princess; and the strong emphasis laid by Pitt upon his future attitude, though under no definite com-

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pulsion to declare himself, makes it probable that relations between himself and Leicester House had already begun, though no certain conditions may have yet been settled. Further, he was anxious to exclude Fox from any influential post, and advised his friends to keep this object in view, for Fox was in alliance with Cumberland, and was therefore to be regarded as hostile to the princess.

Pitt was in Bath throughout the negotiations which followed Pelham's death,[1] and to this circumstance we owe our detailed information of his views, his hopes and fears, of his objects and efforts as displayed in his correspondence. The waters had done him no real good upon this occasion, for exactly at the critical moment he was too ill to venture upon the journey to London, which he was obviously most anxious to make. He repeatedly writes that he can hardly stand upon his feet, and that correspondence is almost an impossibility. Later, towards the end of March, he felt better, and would have undertaken the journey had he remained true to his original intentions. But affairs in London had now assumed a development which removed his desire for return, and he therefore remained in Bath till the end of May. His complaints of ill-health during this period are not to be taken over seriously. He needed some excuse to account for his continual absence. At the beginning of April he had an attack of fever which made blood-letting necessary. That his sufferings were entirely imaginary, as Horace Walpole the younger gives us to understand in his memoirs, cannot possibly be asserted.

As soon as he learnt of Pelham's death, Pitt sent accurate instructions to his friends concerning the procedure to be followed. He was surprised at receiving no news from the opposition camp, that is, from Newcastle, but he was convinced that promotion was impossible except by the help of Newcastle and his adherents, and he advised his friends to make any promises of help conditional upon the guarantee that one of them should receive a cabinet office. He did not mention himself by name, though he was obviously aiming at this post. His idea was that he should obtain, if not the treasury, at any rate Newcastle's secretaryship of state for foreign affairs,

[1] My sources of information are the correspondence upon the subject in *Chatham Papers*, i., in the *Grenville Papers*, in Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii., in the *Quarterly Review*, lxvi., and in Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, ii.

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that Fox, whose influence was to be diminished, would be appointed chancellor of the exchequer, and that the secretaryship of war, thus vacated, would be given to George Grenville. He strongly emphasised the necessity of avoiding any threats of resignation or opposition, or of showing any intention of founding a new party. Shortly afterwards he seems to have learnt from Lyttelton that he could not count either upon the secretaryship of state or upon the treasury, for on March 10 he was working to secure another cabinet office. With this object he made use of a trick. He wrote a confidential letter to Lyttelton, enclosing a second communication, also directed to his friend, which Lyttelton was to lay before the chancellor, Lord Hardwicke, Newcastle's friend, and which was therefore written expressly to meet the eyes of the duke. In this document he explained, after a number of flattering expressions of gratitude to Hardwicke, that he was an unsuitable candidate for the post of chancellor of the exchequer; for this office influence and weight were wanted in the House of Commons, which could be secured only by the king's favour or by national popularity; the former of these advantages he had never possessed, and the latter he had surrendered to avoid endangering the interests of the dynasty. This was intended to be a gentle hint that he had not forgotten the means by which he had formerly made himself respected, namely, an opposition based upon popular principles. He further asserted that he considered the most suitable man for the post was Henry Fox, as none of his friends were attempting to secure it. In this case the secretaryship of war would remain vacant. He did not directly offer himself for this position, but allowed his wish to be seen by emphasising his goodwill to the ministry and his liking for the chancellor. A simultaneous letter to Temple serves as a commentary to this document, and was full of the brightest hopes. Meanwhile Pitt made preparations for departure, with the object of reaping the fruit of his measures on the spot, or of hastening their maturity. To subdue his excitement, which was not without its physical consequences, he betook himself to the study of Bolingbroke's *Essay on Human Knowledge*, a work which greatly displeased him from the ill-concealed arrogance of its author. He compared the author to a learned madman, who, as he had heard, at the end of his very sensible and intellectual dis-

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course, assured his audience that he was the only sane man among them, while they were all mad, and plotting to get him consigned to a lunatic asylum.

While Pitt was communicating these views to his friend Lyttelton, the die had been cast and his hopes were destroyed. On the eleventh of the month Newcastle took over the first office of the state, the treasury, and put Fox in his place as secretary of state. Fox, however, found himself so hampered by limitations that he voluntarily resigned the post in disgust, when he recognised that he had been a mere pawn in the game. On the eighteenth the list of appointments was completed, and though Pitt's friends were able to advance their views, no promotion was found for Pitt himself. The vacant secretaryship was given to an unimportant and docile character, Sir Thomas Robinson, who had previously held a number of diplomatic positions, among others that of ambassador in Vienna during the second Silesian war. He was somewhat reluctant to accept the office, and demanded a guarantee that his tenure should not be of long duration.[1] His bad health was the cause of this disinclination, and perhaps also the consciousness that he was not equal to the difficulties of the post. Fox remained in his own position, though without entering the cabinet. Pitt's friend, Legge, was appointed chancellor of the exchequer, and his place as treasurer of the navy was taken by George Grenville, while Lyttelton became cofferer of the household, with his brother William as sub-cofferer.

Thus Pitt had been again passed over, and Lord Hillsborough's prediction had been verified, that the great orator and former leader of the opposition might expect no promotion under the existing system. The question now arose, what attitude would Pitt adopt in the new situation? He had no moral reason for going over to the opposition; officially he had asked for nothing and had therefore met with no refusal, but Newcastle had made promises to him at an earlier period, which he had not redeemed. Pitt, therefore, applied in the first instance to Newcastle and his friend Hardwicke, and laid before them certain remonstrances couched in tactful language. He submitted the letter to the judgment of his friends, who then transmitted it to the duke. He modestly

[1] *Chesterfield Letters*, ed. Bradshaw, ii. 1097.

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expressed his surprise that the personal interests of his Grace had not induced him to advance an instrument of his own creation, and while he counted the elevation of his friends as some consolation to himself, he also expressed the hope that the king's unfavourable opinion of him might diminish. He concluded with certain hints concerning resignation.

The detailed answers of both ministers are of little importance to us. They attempted to soothe the injured man's feelings, for they well knew that Pitt's submissive tone did not express his full meaning. They also sought to excuse their action, and to disclaim responsibility. They declared the king solely to blame; it was impossible to secure his confirmation of the desired appointment, but their representations had had weight with him, and more might be hoped from the next opportunity. Newcastle being now at the head of affairs, his desire for Pitt's welfare would facilitate the execution of the plan hereafter. These excuses sound very plausible, and the solemn assurances of Lord Hardwicke, a man of unimpeachable honour, whom Pitt held in high esteem, make it certain that the king would not agree to Pitt's promotion: but the question then arises, how did the king come to adopt this attitude, or rather, for what reason did he persist in that attitude for so long? An experienced intriguer, like Newcastle, was accustomed to suggest motives to other men. He might have easily arranged to appear as Pitt's champion, while at the same time indirectly guiding the king's will and strengthening the obstinacy of his refusal. Even if it be true that the king acted independently, as was likely enough in view of Pitt's speech upon the regency, and that Newcastle really championed Pitt, the fact remains that the duke was not anxious for victory, and where there is no desire for victory there can be no triumph. Newcastle need only adduce arguments which he knew would produce an effect upon the king opposed to that at which he seemed to aim. Philip Yorke, Hardwicke's son, who inherited his title, afterwards wrote the following words upon his father's letter to Pitt:[1] 'the truth is that the one (the duke) had no mind to have an efficient minister in the House of Commons: the other (Lord Hardwicke) knew that it would be drawing the king's resentment on himself to propose Mr. Pitt for the only office

[1] *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 216.

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which would have satisfied him.' Thus the chancellor had not acted on Pitt's behalf, believing that Newcastle's efforts had really been foiled by the king's dislike, while Newcastle, even if he made some pretence at effort, had not desired to attain his object.

Pitt's estimate of these letters is preserved to us in a communication to Lyttelton of April 4. He sarcastically observes that Newcastle's letter was composed in so condescending and flattering a style as to cause him real concern. 'I am almost tempted to think there is kindness at the bottom of it, which, if left to itself, would before now have showed itself in effects. If I have not the fruit, I have the leaves of it in abundance, a beautiful foliage of fine words, and if lulling one to sleep would satisfy his Grace, I am quite disposed *à m'endormir à l'ombre de ses lauriers*, not, as de Retz says of the Prince of Condé, of my own.'[1] He considers, however, that the chancellor was genuinely desirous to help him, though he feels himself obliged to resist his influence. Not for all the kindness shown to him would he be induced to give any active support in Parliament to the ministers.

Pitt's replies to the two ministers under dates April 5 and 6 are very adroitly composed. Under the veil of loyal devotion and honest respect, which feelings he asserts were in no way diminished by his deep regrets at the result, he allows his real opinions to be seen plainly. He informs Newcastle that he is hurt, not so much by his exclusion, as by the manner in which it was accomplished; the post of chancellor of the exchequer might at least have been offered him, if only as a compliment. The ministers might have been certain that he would not have accepted it, as he knew that his capacities were equal only to the secretaryship of state. In this respect he was in no way hurt by the preference shown for a capable administrator like Fox or Murray, whose superiority he recognised in every respect; indeed he welcomed such appointments; but the final arrangement, namely the appointment of an unimportant man, he could not but regard as a rebuff to him personally and not to his capacity. To Hardwicke's asseverations he replied that he could not count upon any future success, seeing that he could not but regret being

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 467.

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passed over when there was so great a lack of competent men. 'I cannot,' he continues with admirable choice of phrase, 'conceive any such occasion possible. God forbid that the wants of his Majesty's government should ever become more urgent. Such an unhappy distress could only arise from an event so fatal to this country, and which must deprive me of one of the two great protectors whose friendship constitutes the only honour of my public life, that I will not carry my views or reasonings forward to that melancholy day. I might likewise add (I conceive not unreasonably) that every acquiescence to his Majesty's negative (necessary, as I am convinced it was, to acquiesce) must confirm and render most insurmountable the resolution taken for my perpetual exclusion.' In either letter he expresses a desire to resign his office, not from anger at the unfair treatment he had received, but in despair at ever securing the king's favour, and out of respect for his shattered health.

If these letters be read as hitherto, that is to say, if they are taken in their literal sense, they express nothing more than esteem and confidence towards the two ministers, with deep regrets that mistaken views were entertained upon himself and his circumstances by the king. His observations upon the course which had been followed seem to have been addressed not so much to the ministers as to the king, whose will was therein expressed. We know, however, from his letter to Lyttelton, that Pitt's views were by no means marked by docility and resignation, and that these letters to the ministers must therefore have a different meaning. They are full of veiled threats, which he was able to realise at a later period.

His observation that he did not grudge the secretaryship of state to Fox is a veiled hint of the possibility of an agreement between the two excluded politicians, while his repeated emphasis on the lack of capable men is intended to stigmatise the incapacity of Robinson. These unfavourable expressions upon the new ministers induced the supposition, in view of Pitt's pretended patriotism, that he was ready to attack the ministers in parliament, that he would not fold his hands and see the state suffer loss. This, in fact, is what actually happened. But still more interesting is the real meaning of the expressions in the second letter. The obvious meaning,

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when the phrasing is stripped of its conventional form, is that Pitt could only rise to power by the fall of one of the two ministers, naturally of Newcastle; and though Pitt represents this possibility as a misfortune, the leader must have been seized with apprehension that he would use this only means of securing his own advancement, and would, therefore, attempt to secure Newcastle's overthrow. This opinion is strengthened by the following sentences, in which he explains the uselessness of quiet acquiescence. He hints with comparative plainness that, necessary as his acquiescence was (the word 'was' is important), he should not practise it for the future, that is to say, he would join the opposition. His reference to the king's opposition is not to be taken as proof that he believed Newcastle's account of the proceedings; he is courteous enough to pretend this belief, while he really regards the duke as an opponent, to whom no docility could appeal.

In full consistency with this interpretation are his modest and melancholy observations concerning his wish to resign. His ship, he says, has run upon sands, and as one after another passes him with all sails spread, he thinks it better to give up the struggle. Here his object is merely to deprive the ministers of the hope that he would refrain from acting with the opposition for fear of losing his office. If he really had a desire to resign, he was obviously a free man. He need not fear dismissal, and could take the lists against the government.

It cannot be denied that this announcement contradicts, to some extent, the programme which he had previously developed in concert with his friends upon several occasions. He had constantly advised them to refrain from threats, to show no tendency to opposition, and not to incur the suspicion of attempting to found a new party. It must, however, be remembered that this advice was given before the final decision, and that he was then anxious to allay the apprehension caused by his independent and domineering tendencies. He was anxious then to appear as a loyal adherent, making neither threats nor demands, but thankfully accepting the office that had been given to him, and administering it to the welfare of the state as his protectors desired. Now the situation had changed. Far from realising any success his attitude had brought him a

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repulse, and so, while continuing an outward show of submission, he was in reality cherishing wholly different thoughts. He attempted, without laying bare his intentions to his possible hurt, to demonstrate to the ministers the danger to which they were exposed by their negative attitude, and to inform them that his old powers were still at his command, and that he was prepared to use them in case of necessity. It was a last attempt to induce the ministers to change their minds, an easy task for them, as Robinson had no great liking for his new office. Should the attempt fail, he had certainly resolved to make good his threats. But the chief point of interest to ourselves throughout the whole affair is the fact that Pitt did not regard the king as his opponent, as is usually assumed, but considered that the duke alone had closed the door of the cabinet in his face, in which opinion he was entirely correct.

Pitt, however, was connected with Newcastle, not only by his office of paymaster, but by another tie, the rupture of which must have seemed to him a very serious matter. In view of the approaching elections, the duke had promised to support his candidature for one of his family boroughs. Apart from this it was doubtful whether he would obtain a seat in Parliament at all, for he had broken with the opposition group, and it was thus impossible for him to make his influence felt. This fact sufficiently explains the great precaution with which he approached Newcastle, and the expressions of deep devotion with which he veiled his threats. But while he was thus careful to retain the minister's favour, he was attempting to create a situation which would make him independent of the duke's good offices, even as regarded the elections.

Pitt had now visited Bath with great regularity for many years, and was regarded by the inhabitants almost as one of themselves.[1] He had made a friend of the most influential citizen, Ralph Allen, and had secured popularity in many other quarters. This city was accustomed to elect its own members independently of all patronage, and was at that time pervaded by a strong feeling of opposition. From 1747 the parliamentary members for Bath had been the discontented Marshal Wade, who had utterly failed in the Netherlands and

[1] For the following, cp. Peach, *Ralph Allen*. London, 1895.

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against the Pretender, and Robert Henley, who had been for many years attorney to the Prince of Wales; Thomas Potter, an intimate friend of Allen, had been the prince's secretary, and the prince himself had often visited Allen at Prior Park; indeed, during the previous summer, one of his conferences with Allen had lasted three hours.[1] Pitt's popularity was chiefly founded upon his opposition to the government, and it therefore suffered to some extent from his connection with the Pelhams. But now that relations between himself and the government were strained, and the citizens saw their favourite rejected with contumely, their enthusiasm broke into open manifestations, though it must be said that the flames were fanned by his friends, and that Pitt himself represented his unfortunate condition in somewhat flamboyant colours. No one knew better how to win popular favour. The town council, under Ralph Allen, showed him the greatest attention, and gave him almost royal honours, and this must have inspired him with the certainty that he would find support in Bath if he ever lost his ministerial seat in the House of Commons. Thus he could regard the future with increased confidence. A far greater consolation for all his disappointments was in store for him, of a wholly different character, and coming from an entirely different quarter.

[1] Harris, *Hardwicke*, ii. 438 f.

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CHAPTER XIV

MARRIAGE

We have already had occasion to remark upon the fact of Pitt's long bachelorhood. He was certainly not impervious to female attractions nor disinclined to marriage as such. Long before, he had been a warm admirer of the beautiful Duchess of Queensberry, who had strongly influenced his political career. Horace Walpole relates that she had once induced him to have an attack of the gout in order to avoid the necessity of supporting a cause in Parliament of which she disapproved.[1] We know nothing of any intimacies which might have ended in marriage, but this is in itself no evidence of disinclination for female society. Marriage was, as we have already said, by no means unattractive to him, but the conditions which make marriage possible had hitherto been absent in his case. For a long time, and at the age when marriage is most easily contracted, his pecuniary circumstances were bad and his prospects of securing a lucrative office were remote; afterwards, when he had inherited property and gained a valuable post, no circumstance had arisen to direct him to the choice of a wife, a choice which, in view of his character, would most naturally be dictated by political reasons. Indeed, for marriage with this man, if serious friction were to be avoided, a woman of special character would be necessary; his temperament was arbitrary to a high degree; he had a strong inclination to despotism, which in politics and in private life does not recognise the limits of other spheres of influence. This is especially obvious in his relations with his sister Anna.

The position of this eldest sister of Pitt is already known to us. She had formerly been maid-of-honour to Queen

[1] Walpole to Conway, 1747: Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, i. 254.

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Caroline, and had lost that position on the queen's death; since that date she spent her time chiefly with her many friends, to whom her lively and cheerful character endeared her, or in travelling. Her expenses were met by an allowance from her family, while at a later date, apparently after he had secured the position of paymaster, Pitt gave her £200 a year from his own income. In return Pitt seems to have claimed a kind of guardianship, the right to control her movements, and to demand obedience to his orders. In the correspondence from which I draw my information[1] she reproaches him for demanding absolute submission and blind surrender to his will, and even if the facts were exaggerated by her anger, it is not to be denied that Pitt regarded himself as her guardian and placed somewhat definite limits to her freedom of action. He had no right to assume this position, as he was not the eldest brother; it was the expression of that tendency to which the majority of mankind are liable—to demand a return by way of power for gifts apparently, and on their own showing, presented out of generosity. Generosity, however, comes to an end at that point, and is replaced by the principle of *Do ut des*. Pitt, no doubt, was acting for his sister's welfare, and regarded her unwillingness to follow his advice as foolishness, but her views did not happen to coincide with his, and human freedom largely consists in the power to pursue one's own line of action. It appears that Anna had committed various indiscretions which were unpleasant to Pitt as her brother, and might injure his career, as the responsibility for his sister's actions fell to some extent upon himself; this, however, should have induced him to maintain their relations upon as intimate a footing as possible and to avoid any form of compulsion, especially any that was based upon pecuniary affairs. His sister's financial dependence upon himself gave him the means of accomplishing his will, but this advantage was gained at the expense of sisterly love, and involved the further danger that, if some stroke of chance should make Anna independent, she would break with her brother and go her own way.

In 1741 Anna made a considerable stay in France, and was placed by Pitt under the care of Lord Chesterfield, who helped her with his counsel and advice. Pitt showed himself highly

[1] Chatham MSS., letter to Chesterfield, 1741; letters to Anna, June 19 and 20, 1751.

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satisfied with Chesterfield's behaviour to her, and declared his sister to be the best served power in Europe. 'As long as she follows such advice,' he writes to Chesterfield, 'I am happy to think that the maxim of our constitution, that kings can do no wrong, will be with regard to her literally and strictly verified. I like the state your Lordship gives me of her foreign affairs as much as I dislike that of another great power. First, she knows where she is going and what she is going about; the recovery of what is essentially necessary for her health; in the next place, she is in good company, strengthened with proper alliances, that are both agreeable and useful to her in her designs; lastly, far from burdening her people (*i.e.* her relations) with extraordinary votes of credit, she will be able to live very well within her Civil List. I wish half so much could be said for all foreign journeys.' Thus we see that Pitt was anxious, not only for her welfare, but also for her financial position. He was anxious to know that she was under reliable guidance even upon the Continent, where she was withdrawn from his influence.

While Anna held no position at court she was dependent upon the support of her relations, and of her brother in particular, as her own income was small, and during this period she seems to have shown readiness to fall in with Pitt's views, so that he came to regard her as an obedient sister, whose career he might determine. On the surface the harmony between them was unbroken. Pitt, who mistook the situation, regarded their agreement of thought and feeling as complete, though in reality his sister accommodated herself to his views under compulsion. It was not until she was older and approaching the age of fifty, when Pitt's prosperity allowed him to send her larger supplies, that the pressure became perceptible, and she tried at times to throw off the yoke, or at any rate to avoid concealment of the variance between them. This attempt brought down a serious reproach from Pitt, who repeatedly declared that he was not satisfied with her, and that she did not pay him that degree of respect which was due to his person and position. The existing tension was thus naturally increased; she was older than he, her intellectual powers were by no means contemptible, and she declined to accept the position of subordinate, although her dependence upon her brother prevented any rupture upon her side.

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An important and decisive change then took place in the relations between Pitt and his sister. After the death of the Prince of Wales, when the household of the princess was reorganised (this took place after the issue of the Regency Act in June 1751), Anna Pitt, at Lord Bolingbroke's recommendation, was given one of the principal offices, that of keeper of the privy purse.[1] She had now gained the support she wanted to secure her independence, and her restiveness under the yoke of her brother's guardianship is manifested by the fact that she henceforward opposed Pitt. About June 18 she wrote to him on the subject; we have only a summary of Pitt's answers of June 19 and 20, but from these the main contents of Anna's letter can be inferred; it was a letter of reproach, in which she declared her feelings without restraint. She drew a picture of him for his own contemplation as she herself portrayed him in consequence of his behaviour—the picture of a conceited and domineering man with many faults and weaknesses, who had used his benevolence solely to oppress and humiliate her in the eyes of others. She accused him of spreading exaggerated rumours upon the extent of his pecuniary help, and informed him that it had only been £200 a year, that she declined to receive any further payments, and would return what she had had to the last farthing.

It was a somewhat ignoble proceeding to use her improved circumstances for the purpose of venting her anger upon her brother, whose intentions had been good upon the whole. Anna, however, possessed a somewhat choleric character, which was inclined to explode after a long period of compulsory suppression. The blood of grandfather Thomas flowed in her veins, and Mrs. Jingle[2] could also thunder when occasion arose. Pitt was apparently anxious to restore their former friendly relations; he replied in a quiet and moderate tone and showed his love and his respect, which was perhaps inspired by consideration for her position at the side of the future queen-regent, by the fact that he took her angry vituperations seriously and answered them in detail. Many other men would have contented themselves with a scornful refusal in such a case, and would have treated the whole

[1] Dropmore MSS., pp. xiii. and 135 (Horace Walpole to Anna, June 19, 1751).
[2] P. 111 above.

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matter as a piece of feminine folly. Pitt attempted to explain and to justify his behaviour in answer to her assertions. He showed that he had desired to guide her and had never demanded unconditional submission, and that his claims to respect were not unfounded. He strongly and decisively denied the charge that he had ever spread false reports upon the extent of his pecuniary assistance. 'I declare upon my honour,' he wrote, 'that I never gave the least foundation for those exaggerations which you say have been spread concerning this subject. I also declare as solemnly before God and man, that no consideration could ever have extorted from my lips the least mention of the trifling assistance you accepted from me, but the cruel reports industriously propagated and circulating from various quarters round to me of the state you were left to live in.' It thus appears that he had been evidently forced to provide information upon his sister's income in answer to the statements of his enemies that he had abandoned her in her time of need. It was certainly not his fault that exaggerations had run to the opposite extreme. Naturally he declined to hear of repayment, and begged his sister to be satisfied with the assurance that if he ever fell upon evil days he would have no hesitation in asking her for help.

Far from being soothed by this reply, Anna produced another collection of reproaches, which she launched at her brother in a second letter. She brought up everything he had said to her on this or that occasion in his vexation, and Pitt was forced to resign himself to the task of discussing these separate efforts and excusing his behaviour as far as possible. It was a severe penance which he was forced to undergo for his domineering behaviour, and it is interesting to remark the patience with which he performed it. 'So much for the different points of your letter, my dear sister,' he concludes his reply, 'about which I am sorry to have to reply at such length.' The way was then paved for a personal interview, which Anna had declined to permit until the most important points of difference had been composed. 'I will be with you to-morrow at 9 o'clock,' he writes, 'as, I suppose, this hour will be most convenient to you.' We know nothing of this conversation, but it is to be supposed that the future relations of brother and sister were arranged to their mutual satisfaction in the course of the interview. Anna's old friend,

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Lord Hyde (formerly Lord Cornbury, brother of the Duchess of Queensberry), shortly afterwards expressed his satisfaction to her that she had been able to demand and to secure her proper position in the esteem of another person who could never be her equal, and praised her diplomatic behaviour,[1] an observation which can hardly refer to anything except this business. Henceforward relations between Pitt and his sister seem to have been more friendly, although fresh points of friction occasionally arose. Anna did not get on very well with the princess; her tendency to intrigue brought about a breach, and she went to France, though she was not dismissed from her post. On her return she joined Lord and Lady Bute, through whom she obtained an Irish pension[2] after the accession of George III. Pitt was displeased at this, as he condemned the whole system of pensions, and especially the burdening of the Irish exchequer with such expenses, and he allowed his views to appear in his letter of congratulation.[3]

Still more remarkable were his relations with another sister, Miss Elizabeth Villiers Pitt, who seems to have been a beauty, but devoid of any moral sense, from the little we can learn of her. I have confined myself to reproducing the quotations that affect her personal relations with Pitt without adding any comments. What truth there may be in them I cannot decide, but the writers are to be regarded as reliable authorities upon the whole.

Lord Chesterfield writes on August 16, 1753, from London, to Mr. Dayrolles in Paris:[4] 'You certainly could not do otherwise than as you did with regard to the fair Miss Betty Pitt. There are some reputations *un peu hasardées* that one must suppose are sweet, but hers is really too strong, *et sent trop le relais* to be served up in good company. I have not seen her since her return, and probably shall not, as I frequent little company and as she is received by none. Her compliment to you was a very impertinent one, and I believe her brother will not thank her for naming him upon such an occasion.' Horace Walpole writes further to Horace Mann under date January 28, 1751:[5] 'I am glad you are aware of Miss Pitt:

[1] Dropmore MSS., p. 136.
[2] Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, i. 85.
[3] Under date December 30, 1760: Chatham MSS.
[4] *Chesterfield Letters*, iii. 1069.
[5] *Letters of H. Walpole*, ed. Cunningham, ii. 367. London, 1891.

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pray continue your awaredom: I assure you before she set out to Italy she was qualified to go any Italian length of passion. Her very first slip was with her eldest brother, and it is not her fault that she has not made still blacker trips. Never mention this, and forget it as soon as she is gone from Florence.' Finally Walpole writes on January 17, 1757, to the same friend:[1] 'The famous Miss Elizabeth Villiers-Pitt is in England: the only public place in which she has been seen is the Popish Chapel: her only exploit, endeavours to wreak her malice on her brother William, whose kindness to her has been excessive. She applies to all his enemies, and, as Mr. Fox told me, has even gone so far as to send a bundle of his letters to the author of the *Test*, to prove that Mr. Pitt has cheated her, as she calls it, of a hundred a year, and which only prove that he once allowed her two, and, after all her wickedness, still allows her one. How she must be vexed that she has no way of setting the gout more against him!' The meaning of the last sentence is doubtful. Probably she had made her sufferings from the gout an excuse to ask him for travelling expenses, but the sense may be different.

Apart from this we hear of her in the memoirs of a French nobleman, M. Dutens.[2] He made her acquaintance in Paris in 1755, in company with a younger companion, and soon became so intimate with her that she proposed to set up a secret establishment with him while her parents thought she was travelling. He, however, declined the proposal, and crossed to England, where she gave him a letter of introduction to her brother and also to Lord Barrington. Pitt received him with great kindness and even invited him to Hayes, but the intercourse was suddenly broken off by a letter from Betty. She had had a scene with the parents of Dutens, on account of her relations with the young man, which decided her to withdraw her recommendation. It is remarkable that Pitt seems to have been entirely hoodwinked by this extraordinary character and to have performed her wishes punctiliously. She must have secured enormous influence over him. We also know that distinguished Englishmen were constantly visiting Betty in order to secure her good offices with her brother.

[1] *Letters of H. Walpole*, iii. 57.
[2] *Mémoires d'un voyageur qui se repose*, vol. i. chaps. vi. and vii. Paris, 1806.

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Miss Betty was accustomed to appear in public under different names. Instead of Elizabeth Pitt, she called herself at different times Villiers Betty, Villiers Eliza, Villiers Clara, or Betty Villiers. The result was that upon her marriage in May 1761, the question arose whether she was legally entitled to the legacy of £2000 bequeathed by the governor Thomas Pitt to his granddaughter Elizabeth Pitt in the event of her marriage.[1] In any case it was not withheld, for the marriage with a certain John Hannam took place. We know nothing further of her beyond the fact of her death on February 14, 1770. Pitt had three other sisters besides the two above mentioned: these were Harriett Corbett, the eldest, Catherine Needham, whose husband had formerly sat with Pitt as member of Parliament for Old Sarum, and Mary, who is not mentioned in the will of Thomas, and who was therefore probably born after his death. Nothing further is known of them, and we learn nothing of them from the Chatham manuscripts. Hence Pitt's relations with them cannot have been very intimate.

We thus see that Pitt found some difficulty in agreeing with his near relations, a fact by no means surprising in view of the general character of the whole family. The tendency to independence, to self-assertion, and to domineering, which possibly Pitt had inherited from his grandfather Thomas, had also been distributed among some of the female members of the family, and found expression in different directions. The natural consequence was occasional outbreaks and a constant state of strained relations which was never entirely avoided. Hence, if Pitt's married life was not to be clouded by those shadows which had obscured his relations with his sisters, the woman upon whom his choice fell must be of wholly different character from the Pitt family in general; the fact that Pitt succeeded in finding a wife of this nature must be regarded as a fortunate occurrence for him and for the whole of his career.

The close relations of personal and political friendship which had united Pitt for so many years with the Grenville family made it probable that he would find a wife in this quarter, and we are only surprised that he did not earlier show a preference for Lady Hester Grenville, the only sister

[1] Memorandum in the Chatham MSS.

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of his friend, with whom he now fell deeply in love. All our sources of information, including the Chatham manuscripts, are silent upon the point, and we must therefore content ourselves with suppositions, which, however, become highly probable when viewed with reference to the general situation.

Pitt was wholly absorbed in his political plans and hopes; feeling, as he did, that he was possessed of high capacities for statesmanship, all other inclinations and desires were inevitably subordinated to the imperative longing for supreme power. His marriage can hardly be considered as uninfluenced by these considerations. Hitherto he had felt no need of influential connection by marriage; he had won reputation, friends, and office by personal character alone. Thus he may well have regarded marriage as by no means a necessity, and the burden of family life as a very possible obstacle to his progress. At the present moment, however, he had reached a point where progress seemed difficult; his position was indeed satisfactory, but, at the same time, likely to lead to nothing further, and there was some possibility of his retirement from the post he had secured. Hence he conceived a desire, of which he was not perhaps himself wholly conscious, to strengthen his relationship with the friends remaining to him, and those were the Grenvilles. If the rich Lord Temple withdrew his help, and his was a character wholly unreliable, Pitt would no longer have any support worth mentioning. He would be reduced to rely upon the favour of Newcastle or of the Duke of Cumberland and his friends, and this would lead to no real position or power. It was therefore time to anticipate this ultimate danger by the means we have indicated.

We can very easily explain why Pitt was suddenly attracted to the young sister of his friend in the autumn of 1754. His inclination was very far from pretended; any supposition of the kind is disproved by the impetuosity of his passion. But without some such impulse it would not have occurred to him to devote more attention to her than he had done in previous years. Increased confidence brought forth mutual love. Hester's letters to her friends and relations, the greater portion of which have been preserved, scarcely ever mention Pitt, and never more than by careless allusion. The only proof that he ever held any place in her thoughts

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is a remark of old Lady Cathcart, whose son married one of Lady Hester's friends, Miss Jane Hamilton. She writes in her letter of congratulation to Hester:[1] 'I will burn my books if you do not become happy together, but you will remember that my wishes had given you to him long before, and I am delighted that they have been fulfilled.' Apart from this, her attachment to Pitt seems of almost instantaneous growth.

The correspondence between the young couple, which has been preserved in its entirety, begins from the month of October, that is from the time when the engagement was made public. The many undated notes included in this correspondence are also, for cogent reasons, to be assigned to the autumn of 1754. In one note referring to current trivialities in a tender poetical strain, Pitt writes that he proposes to be at Sunbridge on June 1 and at Wickham on Saturday, dates which would make the engagement begin at a considerably earlier period. These notes, however, cannot possibly belong to the itinerary of 1754. On June 1 he was still in Bath, and Wickham (West Wickham) is near Hayes, the country seat which he bought after his marriage. It was the property of her cousin West, and there Hester was accustomed to meet her husband when he came from the west, as she met him at Bromley Hills when he came from the north, from London. Moreover June 1 was itself a Saturday. There is, therefore, no doubt that this note was written in one of the following years, and has been transferred by mistake to the letters of the engagement period from those written at the time of marriage; if this theory be incorrect we should be reduced to the wildest suppositions.

Pitt's return from Bath was, therefore, not undertaken on account of this affair. We know, from a letter to Temple of May 23,[2] that he expected to arrive in London on July 7 or 8, and that after despatching the business of his office as quickly as possible, which had no doubt accumulated considerably in his absence, he proposed to go to Stowe. He may have carried out this programme, but it was certainly not at Stowe that he determined upon marriage, for on September 10 we find him at Astrop near Wells, a little watering-place

[1] Chatham MSS.

[2] *Grenville Papers*, i. 122.

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in Somersetshire, where he took the waters for three weeks.[1] From there he proposed to go to London, to visit Legge at Holte during the latter part of the month, to return to Bath in October, and thence to visit Encombe. Instead of going to Holte, he reached Stowe and Wotton in the middle of September, and it was at this time that his fate was decided.

Harassed by the political difficulties in which he found himself, he now began to take more interest in his friend's sister, and to make an effort to learn her character, for which he had opportunity enough as they walked undisturbed in the varied scenery of the park, or talked at their pleasure in the house. For political reasons she seemed a suitable wife; she was personally attractive to him, and he wished to verify the possibility of affection. Their respective characters were rather complementary than related, as their married life showed, and it was not surprising that their love became deeper and deeper. It was not until the hour of his departure approached that Pitt resolved to declare himself. He was by no means sure of his success; he might well doubt whether a girl, much younger than himself, could have any love for a man so tormented by illness, or would allow him to plead his cause. However, he made the venture. One morning in the latter days of September they met, as they had often met before, on the banks of the great lake, and Pitt then opened his heart with special reference to the shattered state of his health. To his great joy he found that Hester's feelings corresponded with his own, and that no sympathy with his sufferings could be warmer and purer. Thus the spell was broken, and the burden which had oppressed him was removed. She whom he had wooed with fear and trembling declared that she loved him, and would be his wife. She felt no repulsion at his defects. But his words had shattered the idyllic nature of their intercourse, and when he came next morning to the lake she was no longer there, a clear proof that the character of their intimacy had changed. For its continuance Pitt must secure consent from the proper quarter. His desire to make Lady Hester Grenville his wife was communicated to Lord Temple, the head of the family, and although he must have been aware of the intimacy already

[1] Chatterton, *Memorials*, i. 72 f.

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existing between his friend and his sister, he demanded time to consider the question from every point of view. Meanwhile Pitt went to London for several days, where arrears of business were awaiting him. He was followed by a secret letter from his lady-love which renewed his confidence in her warm affection, and to which he replied with equal tenderness. This letter of October 3 is not only evidence of his feelings and his mode of expressing them, but also gives us a first-hand view of his circumstances and position, and may, therefore, be reproduced here: it runs as follows:—

'Was ever the most amiable goodness like that of Lady Hester Grenville, or felicity like mine? but a few delightful days have passed since it would have surpassed all my hopes to be but suffered to tell the wishes my heart had presumed to form, and to have thought the smallest of yours not unfavourable to mine would have been the sum of all happiness. Your noble treatment of a heart so totally in your power with every adorable circumstance of the most generous and gentle pity had left me nothing I could ask of heaven and you, but soon to return to your feet, except the letter you have blessed me with. Am I then reserved to read the dear avowal of sentiments as interesting to my glory as to my happiness, and to feed my soul upon this infinitely endearing mark of confidence and sweetest pledge of all I wish to live for? And all this generous compassion, which only yourself could feel, clothed in that charming language which only you can find? Those banks of the pond you so sweetly remember, to me are every way delightful; how do I love them for your dear presence there one morning, and for your kind absence from them another? I live on the hope of soon having cause to find them more and more delightful, on the first, most endearing consideration. My journey, you do me the honour to inquire after, was safe; my businesses of various sorts, have been prosperous; for I found means yesterday to make many of them short as well as to despatch many, the day being surely one of the longest of the whole year. I have disposed things for finishing all that remain to-morrow, and hope, God willing, to be at Stow Friday, and to look at you once more, and a million, Sunday morning, if not Saturday night (*sic*). Every way it is you, that help me to despatch, in all the more common businesses. I think of you, and double my diligence to return where you are, and see and hear you the sooner. In the more interesting, I think of you, that I have the glory to be yours, and the happy, happy,

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permission to call you mine, and am animated by the thought to discharge any part I have to sustain and to aspire to be less unworthy of you.

'Stow still holds me in most sensible solicitudes, but I would fain not augur anything gloomy: can friendship, which I have received so much from, that I might almost hope for everything, fail me, when love and you, where I had nothing to pretend, have consented to give me happiness? Yes, I already fear it may; nay feel that, perhaps, it ought, when I think what your establishment calls for. I am then, I can not but be, in infinite disquietudes for Stow: in this painful interval that lies between I shall, I do now press your sweet letter to my heart, run over every word, kiss every letter of it with transports of love and gratitude, blessing the noble, pitying heart that dictated, and the dear hand that wrote it, ever, ever, devotedly yours.

'How infinite are my obligations to Wotton? I venture to send no compliments, much less acknowledgments.'

From this letter we see that Pitt had been forced to spend some days of anxious expectation, which were, no doubt, relieved by the arrears of business which awaited him, and that Temple was fully aware of his responsibility, and was not inclined to make light of his duty to his sister, even in the case of his most intimate friend. He probably spent these days in securing information upon Pitt's financial position and prospects. But there can have been no real doubt of the issue, and when Pitt returned to Stowe on Friday or Saturday the matter had been decided. The legal guardian, far from raising objections, greeted the happiness of the young couple with genuine pleasure.

Hester's letter of thanks to her brother gives us authentic information of her feelings.[1] In moving terms she expresses her love and her happiness, and also her pride at being loved by such a man. 'Every way,' she writes, 'I have millions of thanks to offer you for your love to him, to me, and for those expressions of affection and regard which give me a double joy, as they will recommend me further to your friend, to whom I wish to be recommended by every endearing circumstance, feeling that pride and pleasure in his partiality for me, which his infinite worth not only justifies, but renders right.' She regarded herself peculiarly fortunate for the reason that the

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 123.

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new connection would unite her even more closely than before with her own family, by reason of the friendship existing between her brothers and her betrothed husband. Pitt's letter[1] is equally effusive, and testifies to the firmness and solidity of the friendship which united him with Temple, a friendship which was to be repeatedly tested in critical moments.

The delight of the Grenville family was general. Jemmy broke into extraordinary expressions of joy, and hastened to Wotton to thank his sister for giving him as a brother the one man in the world whom he would prefer to call by that name.[2] Henry the younger brother's letter is marked by calm consideration, but expresses no less satisfaction.[3] 'Indeed, the rank, the character, the great personal merits and virtues of the party concerned made it impossible that his proposition could be received in any other light, or that every Grenville in the world should not breathe the same sentiments and all feel equally proud, equally flattered and pleased with an alliance which reflects so much honour on us all, and which serves to strengthen our ties and connections with a man of all others the most loved, the most esteemed and respected by us.' Lyttelton, who had vainly been awaiting his friend at Hagley, congratulated him in warmer tones.[4] 'Nothing could excuse you,' he writes, 'except Lady Hester. I shall never be entirely satisfied until you visit us together, which I hope may be possible next summer, and then we will shake the old house to its foundations.' To Hester he writes:[5] 'As your friend I congratulate you, and as his I love you for the choice that you have made.' Mrs. Elizabeth Grenville could not refrain from hinting her misgivings, though she immediately rejected them.[6] 'Nothing,' she says, 'can stand in the way of their happiness, provided that Mr. Pitt retains his health, but happiness is so fine a medicine that I hope he will enjoy completer health

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 124 f.
[2] Hester to Pitt, October 13, 1754: Chatham MSS.
[3] To Hester, 1754: *Ibid.*
[4] G. Lyttleton to Pitt, October 26, 1754: *Ibid.*
[5] G. Lyttleton to Hester, October 26, 1754: *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*, undated. This was the wife of G. Grenville, a daughter of Sir William Wyndham. She and Hester had been friends before her marriage. A bundle of letters from Elizabeth Wyndham to Hester have been preserved, but contains not a word upon Pitt.

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than he has yet known.' Legge's opinions were more curtly expressed, though not to Pitt himself. He wrote to John Pitt,[1] 'Our friend and your namesake, I hear, is going to give evident tokens of convalescence by a very intimate union with Lady Hester Grenville. I think the breed will be a good one and can't fail to speak as soon as they are born.' He thus seems to have known Hester as a cheerful character.

Thus Pitt's object had been attained, and there was nothing more to fear, but weeks of separation followed, which the lovers must have felt severely. During the necessary preparations respecting his business and their future household, Pitt proposed to spend October in Bath to improve his health as much as possible. The Wednesday following their second meeting, October 9, was the melancholy day of departure on which Pitt entered his postchaise at Wotton, an unusually anxious day for Hester, as a violent storm arose which she feared might be prejudicial to the health of her future husband. As upon his former departure, she immediately sent a letter after him in which she gives full and unbounded expression to her love and her grief.[2]

The correspondence which now began gives us a clear picture of the mutual relations of the two lovers, who cannot be said to have stood upon an equal footing. Pitt's letters express the warm and deep passion which the mature man felt for his youthful bride, which he expressed in new and ingenious turns of phrase, reminding us at times of his style of Parliamentary oratory. It is impossible to read these letters without emotion and without the conviction that they are the outpouring of a pure, strong character whose capacity for affection had long been choked for want of a worthy object. Especially noteworthy is the submissive thankfulness expressed in every line, which is scarce to be expected from a man of so strong and confident a character. But upon this point we must avoid deception; it is not the devotion and gratitude of one who receives, but of one who gives, and is grateful that he is allowed to give. He wishes to confer happiness, and is passionately in love with the woman who allows him to make her happy, but at the same time he wishes to express his own ideas and to act upon his own methods. A woman who had

[1] Chatterton, *Memorials*, i. 75

[2] Chatham MSS.

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opposed him upon this point, or who had ventured opinions of her own in opposition to his, would not have received that warm affection or these expressions of simple gratitude. He made no special claims upon Hester, even in his times of illness, for he was accustomed to care for himself upon these occasions, and was generally far away from home in Bath during his worst attacks. He was merely anxious to know that his sufferings did not diminish her love, and that she was willing to bear without remonstrance the consequent inconveniences.

Very different were Hester's feelings. Her affection was no less deep and genuine; but while Pitt's love was modified by his energetic character and his tendency to self-glorification, we find that Hester, on the other hand, was chiefly conscious of deep respect and reverence for the important, brilliant, and famous personality to whom she was engaged. She had had opportunity enough to observe him in his intercourse with her brothers, and he must have seemed to her to stand upon heights far beyond her reach. His conversational powers, his authoritative manner, particularly in political discussion, of which the girl understood little, and especially his theatrical bearing, must have made a great impression upon her, greater perhaps than the facts justified. It must have seemed to her a high condescension when this great character showed a strong attraction for herself and began to devote his hours of leisure to her company, and for a long time she may not have believed in the seriousness of his intentions. Now that he had wooed and won her, it was her earnest desire to be worthy of him and to maintain her place in his esteem. There is no question of coquettishness or any feminine devices of the kind. She gave him her entire thoughts and feelings, indeed all that she could give, and she felt herself ennobled and honoured by the right to prove her love for him, which she exercised joyfully and without unnecessary restraint.

Her love was again modified by her sympathy with the invalid, a feeling which no doubt largely contributed to arouse her affection and to break down the barrier raised by the somewhat exaggerated respect with which she had regarded him. His sufferings made him appear more human, and upon this side he descended to her level. She saw the possibility of becoming something to him, and longed for the moment when this possibility might be realised. Thus, while Pitt had been

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afraid that the ill-health might prove an obstacle, it was really the efficient cause of their love. Pitt never fully understood the connection of these facts, and thus we see that he always refers, with a kind of wonder, to her sympathy as an especially grateful circumstance, whereas his state of health was a subject with which she busied herself by preference. Pitt's experience of this subject led him also to pay close attention to her health, and their correspondence therefore contains an amount of hygienic information and advice somewhat unusual in love letters.

During Pitt's absence the legal preliminaries to the marriage were arranged. George Grenville undertook the task of supervising these, which were left in the hands of a solicitor, Thomas Nuthall, a man of high capacity, to whom the East India Company entrusted much of their legal business. He drew up the marriage-contract. Of this we know nothing more, nor is the matter of great importance; one point, however, deserves our attention, namely, the reversionary right to the great Marlborough inheritance, which still belonged to Pitt.[1] The young John Spencer, who alone stood between Pitt and this inheritance, was now twenty years of age and still unmarried. As the prospect of Pitt's succession had not disappeared, provision had to be made for this eventuality. Grenville and Nuthall proposed that the inheritance should become family property, but Pitt declined, for the following reasons. The estates fell into two groups: firstly, the property of the family Spencer-Sunderland, which had reverted to John's father, as his elder brother had succeeded to the Duke of Marlborough's estates with his title; and secondly, the allodial estates of the Duchess Sarah of Marlborough, which she had purchased out of her private means. Pitt now required that the first group should be made inalienable family property, and that the second should be left at his free disposal. His reasons were that he wished to be able to pay John Spencer's debts, which he would feel himself morally bound to meet, in case of the latter's death; further, he wished, if he succeeded to the inheritance, to build himself a fine house in London, and also a house in the neighbourhood of the City; finally, he was anxious to purchase Old Sarum.

Pitt had formed a brilliant series of plans at this period.

[1] Cp. *Grenville Papers*, i. 131; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, art. Spencer.

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He proposed to make an imposing appearance, and to rival the splendour of the high nobility. His wish to purchase the old family borough is somewhat remarkable; it was still in his brother's possession, and parliamentary seats of this kind were not usually given away with any readiness. Pitt's wishes show that he must have known that the borough would be for sale. Hence I am inclined to believe that Pitt met Thomas in London[1] at the latter's request, in the summer of 1754, to discuss the reduced value of Boconnock, and that Thomas offered him the family borough for sale. The purchase would provide Thomas with funds, and the seat would remain in the family. Pitt may have promised to buy the place in the event of his succeeding to the Marlborough inheritance. We are told that in the year 1752 Pitt travelled to Cornwall with the object of buying his brother's property,[2] which must, therefore, have been on sale for a considerable time.

As things went so smoothly, Pitt proposed to be married on November 7 or 8,[3] but Hester decided on the 15th, doubtless out of consideration for her trousseau; at any rate the marriage eventually took place on November 14. Pitt returned at the end of October and met Hester in London on November 3. For the first few days she lived there alone, probably with a *dame d'honneur*, in Argyle Buildings, not far from Oxford Circus, her relatives remaining in the country until the 7th. Pitt was then able to visit her when time allowed, and to renew the idyll of their country life. To these happy days belong the undated notes, which give us details of their doings. Pitt usually visited her about two or three o'clock on coming from the pay-office or from his house at Enfield, dined with her, and remained until the evening. On one occasion he invited her to South Lodge, but the proposal fell through, as the ladies who were to do the honours of his house were unable to come. On another occasion, when he was unable, owing to illness, to come to Argyle Buildings, he asked her to visit his sister 'out of sympathy and love.' Apparently he proposed to meet her there by chance, where full morning dress would not be compulsory.

[1] Thomas to Pitt, August 8: Chatham MSS.
[2] *Bedford Papers*, ii. 114.
[3] *Grenville Papers*, i. 128 and 132.

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Thus the last days of her engagement passed by in constant and undisturbed companionship, and the only sorrow which broke their happiness was a terrible event in the Queensberry family.[1] The duke's son, Lord Drumlanrig, had recently married a daughter of Lord Hopetoun. While the parents were travelling to London with the young couple, a pistol, which the son carried upon him, suddenly exploded in the carriage, and killed him on the spot, an accident which aroused the general sympathy.

We have no details of Pitt's marriage, but it can hardly have been a great function, for so late as October, he says in a letter to his fiancée, 'the less preparation and the less outward show, and the less of everything except your own lovely self, the better in every way.' We only know that the Grenville brothers were there, and that the Lyttelton family had reached London a short time before,[2] probably in order to be present.

There is no doubt that the marriage was happy in the extreme. Hester proved a faithful, compliant, and admiring wife, content to rule her household, and afterwards to bring up her children in her own respect for their father. Important business was left entirely to her husband. She did not even interfere in the incident of finding a new home, which arose shortly after their marriage. We do not know why Pitt gave up South Lodge, but probably the house was too small for a growing family. He chose a property to the south of London, Hayes Place, near Bromley, in Kent. When he wrote to his wife in December 1754 for advice upon the matter, she replied from Wotton, 'For the grand affair proposed by my dear love, I have only to reply that I wish him to follow what he judges best, for he can best judge what sort of economy suits with the different plans which he may choose to make hereafter. Whatever you decide upon will be secure of being approved by me.'[3] Pitt then built a house in Hayes to suit his needs, and gradually bought so much land that the property covered an area of one hundred acres. His immediate neighbour was Hester's cousin, Gilbert West, of

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 130, note.

[2] Hester to Pitt, October 24: 'I found a letter here yesterday, from Miss Lyttelton, notifying the arrival of the family.'—Chatham MSS.

[3] Chatham MSS.

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West Wickham,[1] who probably decided his choice of the site. Hester troubled herself not at all with politics, and very few political observations are to be found in her letters. Only events of great importance are mentioned in these, though she keenly followed their development so far as they affected her husband. He was the centre of her life, and affairs were important only as far as they related to him. She certainly was not without influence upon him, and that influence was probably increased by her voluntary subjection, and by the fact that she did not interfere in matters outside her scope. She had indeed no influence upon his public career or his public dealings, but in private life her power was such as Pitt would hardly have conceded to a self-willed wife. At the same time it cannot be proved that his character lost, under his wife's influence, any of the roughness which is so often apparent, and his domineering tendencies can hardly have diminished in an environment where he was so unconditionally recognised and honoured as master.

[1] *Chatham Papers*, i. 246.

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CHAPTER XV

NEGOTIATIONS

PELHAM's death and the consequent changes had taken place at the close of a parliamentary period. The parliament which had lasted from 1747 was dissolved in April, and the general elections followed immediately. As the government were in a safe position owing to opposition reinforcements, the elections passed by without great notice. The new House of Commons displayed little perceptible difference from the old, and if the electors and patrons of the seats had not concluded their compact at an earlier and more disturbed period, much money might have been saved. On this occasion Pitt was elected for Aldborough in Yorkshire, a family borough of the Duke of Newcastle, which he had no hesitation in accepting, although he was resolved to join the opposition if his wishes were not fulfilled.[1] For this he has been often reproached and charged with dishonesty, and the first view of his attitude leaves an unfavourable impression. The excuse offered that Pitt did not need the seat, as he could have found another elsewhere in 1756, seems to me inadequate; if other seats were offered him in 1756, that was not the case in 1754, when his opposition action had not begun. Moreover, any other seat would have cost him or his friends great expense. Newcastle was thus undoubtedly overreached in the matter, but this was only relieving a pickpocket of his purse. Pitt had been legally elected by the inhabitants of Aldborough, and was therefore their representative to act as he pleased. By whom or by what means the electors were induced to act as they did, was nothing whatever to him. Had he indeed promised to support the duke, in the event of his election, he would have been morally bound, but he cer-

[1] Cp. *Quarterly Review*, lxvi. 215.

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tainly made no promise of the kind. Lyttelton, who now came into opposition against Pitt, afterwards attempted to prove the existence of promises in his 'Observations on Mr. Pitt's Letters of 1754,'[1] but his evidence was derived only from those letters in which Pitt promised to help the duke under certain conditions. These, however, were not binding, and had no connection with his election. If Pitt had made any arrangement of the kind, he would certainly have kept it strictly to the letter, at least, and had he broken it, his opponents would have lost no opportunity of reminding him of the fact; but this did not occur. Moreover, Pitt afterwards congratulated himself on one occasion that he had never entered into any pledge as regards his attitude in Parliament.[2] Thus Newcastle had remained under the delusion that Pitt would be faithful to the ministry, whether he were asked or not. He had not understood, or had failed to take seriously, the hints contained in the letters of May, and thus the election had run its course, with the result that the member for one of his own family boroughs was an undeclared supporter of the opposition.

Pitt therefore joined Fox, who had been excluded like himself, with the object of overthrowing their common enemy, Newcastle, if possible, and of seizing the posts now occupied by the duke and his tool Robinson. Fox was to be first lord of the treasury, and Pitt secretary of state for foreign affairs; if the attempt were unsuccessful, they proposed to force the minister to a compromise. A firm and permanent union, strengthened as it was by the Duke of Cumberland, Fox's patron, could hardly have failed to secure the desired result, especially if further complications arose in the foreign policy of the country. Newcastle was generally unpopular, even with most of his officials;[3] the king, indeed, supported him, but Fox, on the other hand, was on terms of close intimacy with the Countess of Yarmouth, the king's mistress.[4] However, the alliance of these new opponents rested on an insecure foundation, as their respective objects were by no means coincident. Fox, as will afterwards appear, was an instrument

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 477 ff.
[2] *Chatham Papers*, ii. 292.
[3] Dodington, p. 330 f.
[4] Harris, *Hardwicke*, iii. 20.

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in the hands of the Duke of Cumberland, and Pitt, while hoping to gain office with Fox, had no intention of becoming dependent upon him.

Pitt's change of front led to a break in the friendship, which had proceeded uninterruptedly for years, and had largely contributed to his initial success.[1] George Lyttelton was one of Pitt's adherents, and Newcastle therefore gave him the post of cofferer after Pelham's death. He did not, however, feel bound upon this account to imitate his friend's change of action, and to endanger his new position to oblige Pitt, merely because the hopes of the latter had not been fulfilled. Similarly, Pitt's relations with the Grenvilles became less intimate (the connection was originally due to Lyttelton's influence), even though he had married their sister, and thus we clearly see the political importance of the union. Lyttelton gave his support to the ministry without reserve; he was confirmed in his attitude by the hints of Newcastle, who induced him to believe that Pitt had thrown away his chance of the secretaryship of state by his alliance with Fox, for the post had been destined for him, could the king's prejudice have been surmounted. That possibility of which the minister had vainly sought to persuade Pitt, he was now able to suggest to his friend with the object of drawing him to his own side and turning him against Pitt. His task was the easier, as Lord Hardwicke, who undertook the business of persuasion, was honourably convinced of the information which Newcastle had commissioned him to impart.

A final reason for a breach in the old friendship was provided by an attempt of Lyttelton to reconcile the Duke of Bedford with the ministry.[2] Pitt was irritated, as his friend usually consulted him upon such questions. Moreover, the attempt was against his own wishes, as Bedford was intended to become an important member in the new opposition alliance. We know that the duke was in close relationship with Fox and Cumberland. He therefore declined to listen to Lyttelton and clung to Pitt, but the latter took occasion on this affair to break publicly with his friend. Naturally their hostility did not extend to family life; friendly inter-

[1] On this point cp. 'Observations on Mr. Pitt's Letters of 1754,' Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 477 ff.

[2] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 483.

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course even with political opponents was quite usual in certain circumstances. None the less, the loss to Pitt was considerable, for Lyttelton's place was taken by unreliable colleagues, who had no personal interest in him.

Pitt's first speech, after the opening of the new parliament, which took place on his marriage day, November 14, was connected with his latest change of attitude. He was supporting a bill to improve the position of the pensioners in Chelsea Hospital.[1] Hitherto they had received no pension during their period of probation, which lasted a year, and were therefore forced to contract debts upon their notes of hand, with the consequence that they fell into the hands of usurers, who oppressed them cruelly. Pitt now proposed that they should receive half a year's pension in advance; the motion was generally approved, and the bill passed without opposition. He has been generally praised for thus supporting the interests of the veterans, but the idea did not originate with him. We find that Fox had begged him, in the previous August,[2] on behalf of the Duke of Cumberland, to devise a remedy for this grievance, and that Pitt was thus merely carrying out the wishes of his new friends. As military paymaster he was chiefly concerned in the removal of this grievance, and it would be wrong to conclude in consequence that he was a particular champion of the army.

If his action upon this point was the outcome of his new connections, it was of a somewhat indifferent character, and stands upon the same footing as the few parliamentary speeches which he delivered during his recent years of quiet resignation. The lion, however, speedily announced his return to action, in a manner which horrified the House in general and the old duke in particular. The electoral scrutinies gave him an opportunity for returning to a question which had formerly been a favourite topic, that of bribery and corruption. In October he had returned an abrupt answer to the duke in reply to a request for advice upon American policy: 'Your Grace knows,' he said, 'that I have no understanding for these matters, and therefore do not wish to be informed of them.'[3] When Newcastle discussed the elections with him he replied bitterly, 'Fewer words, if you please, my lord, for your words have long

[1] Thackeray, i. 206.
[2] *Chatham Papers*, p. 110 ff.
[3] Dodington, p. 317 *f.*

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lost all weight with me.'[1] Now an admirable opportunity was offered him to turn the whole force of his oratorical power upon the House of Commons, and to secure their respect.

Mr. Wilkes, a friend of Pitt's, petitioned against the younger Delaval, who was elected for Berwick solely by means of bribery.[2] 'The younger Delaval made a speech on his being thus attacked, full of wit, humour, and buffoonery, which kept the House in a continual roar of laughter. Mr. Pitt came down from the gallery and took it up in his highest tone of dignity. He inquired the reason of the uproar, and was astonished when he heard what had been the occasion of their mirth. Was the dignity of the House of Commons on so sure foundations that they might venture themselves to shake it? Had it not, on the contrary, been diminishing for years, till now we were brought to the very edge of the precipice? He hoped that the speaker would be able to raise them, for he (Pitt) could do no more than defend them. "Unless," he cried, "you will degenerate into a little assembly serving no other purpose than to register the arbitrary edicts of *one* too powerful *subject*."'

This speech, of which the most striking passages are here reproduced, resembles the letters written in May to Newcastle and Hardwicke; it had a meaning of its own, which would be obvious to every member of the House of Commons. The plain meaning of his words amounted to this: in recent years when I have let you go your own way your morality has diminished, and it is high time for me to resume my action, otherwise you will become mere creatures of the Duke of Newcastle; the words 'one' and 'subject' were emphasised, thus hinting that whereas there had formerly been two rulers, Newcastle and Pelham, the whole power was now in the hands of one man. Thus, while the speech professes merely to be a protest against unseemly behaviour, it was in reality a declaration of war against Newcastle. He wished to inspire the House with a sense of the reality of their existence, and thus inform it what it should be in his opinion as the free and representative assembly of the people. Pitt thus placed his finger upon the danger which most strongly threatened the

[1] H. Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, i. 407 f.

[2] Related in H. Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, i. 408; Thackeray, i. 207 f. (Letter of Fox to Hartington).

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existing system and its supporters. For years the government had conferred new privileges and powers upon the House under the presupposition that its powers should be used for their benefit as commanding a majority. Were they deprived of the possibility of securing a majority by their accustomed methods, they would be confronted by an irresistible power, which, as Pitt at any rate hoped, could only be led by a really great character. Nor was the danger by any means remote. The proud ideas of the revolution period were still operative, and the hearts even of the corrupt members beat higher at the thought of being the representatives of the nation and the members of the most powerful corporation in the kingdom, especially if that idea were placed before them by a dominant personality. Thus the speaker, against whom Pitt had dealt an indirect blow, could not refrain from shaking hands with him at the conclusion of the sitting. Vexation and fear, on the other hand, gave the Duke of Newcastle a severe attack of indigestion.

Ultimately the old duke was to blame for this outburst, which would otherwise have been delayed, and perhaps have been modified. He had reported a conversation with Pitt to the king, without the authorisation of Pitt himself, to whom he afterwards admitted the fact, repeatedly excusing himself with the words 'all for your good, all for your good.' Pitt, however, was well aware that the cunning minister carefully concealed any remarks he might have made to his discredit. He therefore felt himself under no obligation to spare the duke. This attack was followed by others, which were not directed immediately upon Newcastle, but upon his subordinates Robinson and Murray, though the allied champions soon divided their labours, Pitt devoting his attention to the solicitor-general, and Fox to the secretary of state.

Murray was laid open to attack by his earlier Jacobite tendencies, the existence of which is to be explained, no doubt, by his Scottish descent. He had formerly been impeached in the House of Commons on this account, but without success. Suspicions, however, had not been allayed, and Pitt now gave them full expression. In the course of a debate upon the army, on November 27,[1] the question arose as to whether there was any fear of the Jacobite danger.

[1] Thackeray, i. 210; Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, i. 412.

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The ministerialists denied the fact, asserting that even those who had been brought up amid Jacobite ideas had proved themselves loyalists upon examination; the eggs hatched by a hen had produced ducklings. Pitt then got up and declared that he knew a hen of this kind, that had indeed hatched himself, namely the University of Oxford, but even if he had no similarity to her, they need not be too sure that all she hatched would ever entirely forget what she had taught them. These and other observations upon the Jacobite inclinations of the Oxford party were aimed principally at Murray, who, as we know, had been one of Pitt's contemporaries at that old loyalist university.

In this way Pitt attempted to gain the upper hand of his opponent, while Fox delivered veiled attacks upon Robinson. Their opposition was not declared as such, for in that case they would have lost their offices, and this would have been inconvenient to Pitt, who had just begun housekeeping; their object was so to hamper the position of the leading ministers that they would be forced to resign or to take their opponents into the cabinet. Newcastle would have been very glad to dismiss the troublesome paymaster, except for the fact that this action would have increased the difficulties of his own situation. The conditions thus continued throughout February. 'In Parliament,' writes Chesterfield at this date,[1] 'things go very quietly this session. . . . Mr. Pitt, though very angry, hints rather than declares opposition, unwilling to lose his employment, and at the same time unable to stifle his resentment.' Pitt was not anxious to stifle his resentment, for he had promised to manifest it as occasion might offer, but during this winter no great or decisive action was undertaken.

The situation was changed at last by the fact that Fox diverged from the path that he had agreed to follow with Pitt. Historians have previously represented the situation as though Newcastle had succeeded in dividing his most dangerous opponents, and bringing the more desirable of them over to the ministerial side. The fact is, however, entirely different, and the difference can only be understood if we consider England's situation at the moment, and the tension which was speedily to result from the great Seven Years' War. We

[1] *Chesterfield Letters*, iii. 1118 f.

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have in particular to note their position in the colonies, where the struggle had never entirely ceased since the war of the Austrian Succession, though it had not resulted in any special success for England.

Affairs in America and India will receive detailed treatment hereafter. At the present moment we shall narrate only such facts as will facilitate the understanding of what follows.

In India the French had won a very important position owing to the strong and clever policy of the governor Dupleix; their power was chiefly founded upon the friendship of the important native princes. The English with difficulty maintained their ground, until the recall of Dupleix in 1754, when they found themselves upon a more equal footing. In the resulting compromise the French government showed a tendency to peace, while the English were inclined to use the concession of their rivals to secure the expulsion of their greatest enemy. In North America the point in dispute was the district lying behind the British colonies, where the French had established themselves on the river St. Lawrence, about the great lakes, and upon the Mississippi. As the English settlements were pushed beyond the Alleghany mountains and reached the upper courses of the Ohio at the confluence of the Alleghany and the Monongahela, they came into collision with bodies of hostile troops who were stationed to open up and secure the shortest route from the lake of Ontario to the Mississippi. In the summer of 1754 a battle was fought near the modern town of Pittsburg. The French emissary, Jumonville, was treacherously shot by the English while reading his commission, and his escort were made prisoners. The French replied by expelling the English from the angle of the Ohio and erecting a strong fort, Duquesne. Colonel Washington, who came up with reinforcements, was taken prisoner, but as war had not been declared, the prisoners of either party were released. This was the first encounter in the great struggle which was now to break out once more. Troops were immediately sent out from England and came into action the following year, 1755, but again with disastrous results.

The course of American affairs naturally occasioned a vigorous interchange of despatches between the two courts.

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The French had shown great compliance in India, and displayed intentions no less pacific in the present instance, while their ambassador, Mirepoix, made every effort to bring the negotiations to the desired issue.[1] The Duke of Newcastle showed similar inclinations, and if the negotiations had been left to these two men, some accommodation would have been secured. In London, however, an opposition school of thought had arisen, which attempted to overthrow the pacific understanding, and eventually with success. This party was led by the Duke of Cumberland, with his supporters, Henry Fox and Lord Granville, who played upon this occasion a part which was a repetition of his former political action.[2] These men are to be regarded as the leaders of the war party, and their efforts were directed to placing the country in a proper state of preparation, to arousing the military spirit in the nation, and to thwarting all efforts for a compromise. It cannot be said that their influence was decisive, for the king, who had the last word, gave ear to both parties, but they possessed so much influence in the cabinet councils that they were able at times to modify the cabinet action as they desired. Hence the French proposals, submitted in March and April, which were highly moderate, were answered with exaggerated demands, and those concessions, without which no bargain can be concluded, were obstinately refused. England demanded nothing less than the whole eastern shore of the lakes Erie and Ontario, part of the valley of the Ohio, and one bank of the St. Lawrence. France firmly declined to entertain the proposal, and Newcastle made an attempt upon his own responsibility, in concert with Robinson, to secure an understanding by moderating the English demands at the end of March, but he could not gain the support of the cabinet, and was obliged to disavow his own action.

Newcastle's position was thus uncomfortable in the extreme. In Parliament he had to submit to attacks, and in the cabinet to humiliations. If peace could have been secured, his power would have remained unshaken, but foreign events had shattered

[1] Reports of the Prussian embassy in the Berlin state archives.

[2] Report of the Prussian embassy, April 15, 1755: 'Au reste, il est vrai que c'est le Lord Carteret, qui est un de ceux qui échauffe le plus la nation, et qui a empêché que l'accommodement avec la France n'ait eu lieu sur un pied raisonnable.' Similar expressions in other reports.

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it to its foundations, and brought more energetic men to the front. Pitt, again, who was one of the duke's opponents, was by no means satisfied with his own position. He had already observed in the course of the winter that Fox did not support him or meet his views as he had hoped, but was pursuing some policy of his own. If he were to remain in alliance with Fox, he would have to join the party of the Duke of Cumberland and follow his orders, and thus declare himself a member of the war party. For this, however, Pitt was disinclined. He wished to secure the guiding power for himself.

The time was now approaching when the king usually went to Hanover and left the regency to carry on the government. It was therefore an important question, which party should secure the upper hand in this corporation which could exercise royal rights. Cumberland exerted himself vigorously to supplant the ministers. He succeeded in securing his own appointment as a member of the council for the first time,[1] and advised his adherent, Fox, to try and gain a seat in the cabinet, that he, too, might be able to enter the regency.[2] Fox would have been very glad to carry with him his coadjutor Pitt, whose help he valued, and the two men had an interview upon the point, but Pitt declined to co-operate.[3] Fox's proposals were outside the limits of his own policy; his chief aim was to overthrow Newcastle and secure his complete downfall; then, and not till then, was he ready to consider the new government. By accepting a seat in the cabinet at this moment, Fox would again save the old duke. The treasury, which Pitt had intended for Fox, with the object of becoming secretary of state himself, was still occupied, and the government patronage remained in the same hands as before. Pitt thus considered that the alliance was dissolved, and declined to act with Fox any longer. He did not, however, regard Fox as guilty of any breach of confidence, and gave him express assurance of his high esteem. Fox had acted without any concealment from Pitt, and had discussed his action with him in full; the supposition that he proposed to gain Pitt's office by pro-

[1] Report of the Prussian embassy, April 29, 1755: 'C'est pour la première fois, que le Duc de Cumberland en sera membre, et c'est par l'influence du parti guerrier que le Roi l'a nommé.'

[2] Cp. letter from Mr. Potter to Temple, *Grenville Papers*, i. 140 ff.

[3] Cp. *Chatham Papers*, i. 124 ff.

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curing his dismissal he had rejected as an insult. Thus the situation was not as it has been usually described; Newcastle had not won over Fox, nor had he broken up the hostile alliance in this way. Fox himself afterwards related that he secured a seat in the cabinet and the regency council by the influence of the Duke of Cumberland, and pursued his main object of undermining the position of Newcastle and his friends, the representatives of peace.[1]

Pitt thus found himself isolated, but his importance had gradually increased so far that he attracted attention from another quarter. This fact is again connected with foreign affairs, which we must here recount briefly.

The increasing tension with France naturally aroused apprehensions in the king that the enemy's attacks might be directed against his own province of Hanover, a possibility which he kept in view upon the occurrence of every crisis, and for the avoidance of which he was continually seeking ways and means. On this occasion he was not so much afraid of a direct menace from France, as that the Prussians, who were in alliance with the enemy, might occupy the country, which had little power of resistance, as differences of opinion had arisen with Prussia also at this period. On the one hand Prussia and Hanover were disputing for the possession of East Friesland, and on the other hand King Frederick had ventured to violate English property two years previously, and had thus aroused the anger of the nation. The English fleet, in virtue of their pretended maritime supremacy, had inflicted severe loss upon the Prussian merchants during the previous war; as the required compensation was not paid after repeated demands, the Prussian king had forbidden the final payment of the Silesian debt, which was in the hands of English capitalists, until the claims of his own merchants had been satisfied. This action was regarded by the English, who were not accustomed to such treatment, as a distinct expression of hostility, and they were of the opinion that they would have to prepare for the worst from Prussia. They therefore began to enter into subsidy conventions with Russia and with Hesse, which were intended to secure an adequate supply of military help in the event of an attack upon Hanover.[2]

[1] Cp. *Chatham Papers*, i. 124; *Grenville Papers*, i. 144.

[2] Details of the origin of the Russian treaty are given in a document in the

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King George was anxious to visit the Continent in May 1755, a plan energetically opposed by his leading ministers, on the ground that the king must be at his post in case of an outbreak of war. The truth was that they did not wish the supreme power to be handed over to the Duke of Cumberland and the war party during these critical months. However, the king was not to be persuaded. His temper rose so high over the affair that the ministers feared an illness if they opposed his desires further.[1] The council of regency was appointed, consisting of sixteen members, and including, in particular, Cumberland, Hardwicke, Granville, Newcastle, Holdernesse, Robinson, and Fox.

Under the circumstances Pitt's support had no immediate value for Newcastle. The course of affairs was inevitably making for war, and all that could now be done was to avoid ill-considered action and to make the best of existing opportunities; Pitt did not possess a position which would enable him to co-operate in this task. However, the situation changed. The king continued negotiations in Hanover for the treaties of subsidy, being little inclined to break with France until their conclusion. In these Hanoverian affairs Newcastle was entirely at the king's service; his submission upon such points was the best, and indeed the only, security for his continuance in the post of minister, and he was therefore obliged to show special and successful zeal. Upon the question of subsidies, however, the final word lay with the House of Commons, and here Pitt's influence at the beginning of these military disturbances was very great. The wavering attitude of the divided government offered many points of attack, and Pitt was able to use every advantage which would turn popular favour in his direction. Moreover, he really knew something of war, far more than any of the ministers, with the exception of Granville.[2] The subsidy question as treated by Pitt must have appeared an extremely dangerous measure; it had been approached with discretion even by the

Public Record Office, entitled, 'General State of the Negociations with the Court of Russia for a treaty of subsidy and of the conditions of the treaty concluded in September 1755,' of October 2, 1755.

[1] Report of Prussian embassy, April 25, 1755.

[2] He afterwards admitted that he had learned much from Granville.—Thackeray, ii. 213.

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war party, while Newcastle was pledged to decide it as the king wished. For these reasons Pitt was the duke's most dangerous opponent, as he might become his most reliable ally, and every effort must be made to win him over. Newcastle then made repeated efforts to discover at what price he could secure the great orator's support, for even at this moment he had no idea of unconditional surrender.

The first attempt began with a conversation between Pitt and the worthy Horace Walpole, shortly before the king's departure.[1] This statesman was honestly anxious to see a harmonious and comprehensive cabinet which would be able to deal with the difficulties of the situation, and therefore argued in favour of a union of Fox and Pitt with the ministers.[2] When he inquired what Pitt really wanted, he was informed that while Pitt had no immediate anxiety to become secretary of state, he wished to be struck off the proscription list on which the king had retained his name for so many years, and this was a matter which rested entirely with Newcastle. When it had been accomplished the seals would be reserved for him in case of a vacancy. Walpole thought he might hold out some prospect of success in this direction, and they parted with the best hopes: but Newcastle declined absolutely to agree to these terms, and told Walpole with some vexation that he had exceeded his commission and gone further than he, the duke, was either willing or able to go.

Some time later Newcastle again tried his fortune through the intervention of the attorney-general, Charles Yorke, a son of Lord Hardwicke, and a lawyer of great learning.[3] Pitt was somehow induced to pay him a visit, and on Sunday, July 6, 1755, between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, a conversation took place concerning Pitt's intentions and prospects. Pitt abandoned his former concession and would no longer be satisfied with the promise of the seals, as Newcastle had rejected the conditions he then offered, namely, the removal of the king's displeasure. He asserted that he could only be approached with such terms as these, 'Sir, here is the plan for dealing with the king's affairs, here is the post (the secretaryship of state) in which you can further that plan, and these

[1] Dodington, p. 338 f. [2] *Chatham Papers*, i. 135 f.
[3] For the further negotiations, cp. Harris, *Hardwicke*, iii. 26 ff.

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are the friends with whom you can work in common.' Pitt declined to hear anything more of the duke's so-called friendship, and coldly refused to arrange a meeting with him.

It is obvious from his attitude that Pitt was well aware of the improvement in his position, consequent upon the progress of the subsidy negotiations, and that he increased his demands correspondingly. An indefinite promise of the secretaryship would have been no use to him in view of the onward march of events.

The chancellor himself now hit upon a plan for securing to his friend Newcastle the help he desired, and negotiations thus received a more official character. Hardwicke began with the same proposals which Pitt had formerly demanded of Walpole. Pitt was to support the ministry in Parliament, which would do its best in return to inspire the king with a more favourable opinion of Pitt's character, as had indeed been already attempted, though without entire success. Then as soon as a vacancy should occur, they would attempt to secure for him the post which he earnestly desired. Pitt energetically disclaimed the last words, and strongly emphasised the fact that he had never applied for the secretaryship: indeed, we know how carefully he had avoided anything of the kind in his letters. He went on to declare that if the seals were given to him he would make no other use of them than to return them to the king, so long as his displeasure continued, and that he would accept them only at the king's express wish. Pitt was thus firmly convinced that Newcastle had ruined his chances with the king,[1] for on no other theory could he explain the monarch's obstinate resistance. He may very well have been right in his supposition. Hence he made all reliance upon the duke's honesty conditional upon a change in the king's attitude towards him. Until this was brought to pass, he considered that Newcastle only desired to make use of him for the moment, and to throw the responsibility for the nonfulfilment of his promises upon the king.

The conversation turned upon the Hanoverian question, upon which Pitt explained his views and portrayed that course of policy which he was prepared to support. He admitted that the demands of the electorate could not be entirely neglected if

[1] Cp. Almon, *Anecdotes*, p. 109 f. 'The Duke perfectly knew, he said, that the royal displeasure arose from misrepresentation.'

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attacks were made upon it with the object of damaging English interests and as a possession of the English king, and not merely in consequence of disputes with which England had no concern. This was a line of argument continually employed[1] by all who wished to support the king's private interests without endangering their own reputation for patriotism, and it is worth our while to examine the question in greater detail.

I have already attempted to show that the union with Hanover was wholly in accordance with the interests of England, as France could then be occupied upon the Continent, and her strength withdrawn from the sea and from the colonies. Thus the support of Hanover was an entirely national policy. English statesmen, however, had failed to appreciate the connection, and were inclined to think that everything which was done for the electorate was merely a sacrifice to the king's personal interests. Pitt had also fallen into this error. To examine from the evidential point of view the opinion which he now expressed, it will be necessary to disregard the true state of affairs and to accept Pitt's view of the relations between the two states as antecedently correct. The question then arose, supposing that England had had no interest in the welfare of Hanover, and supposing that Hanover had been an entirely alien state which chance had brought under the government of the same king, was England morally bound in that case to defend Hanover if her enemies made the existing union an excuse for attacking the electorate? It was certainly practical to act on behalf of Hanover, for an enemy should be opposed wherever occasion presents itself, and this fact had been entirely appreciated by England during the age of Napoleon. In the present case a question of obligation was at stake. Pitt declined to recognise that English interests were in any way involved, and regarded England only as morally bound. This, in my opinion, was not the case. Every state must provide for itself, and if another state is irritated by its friendly relations with a third, it should of its own resources repel attacks, and has no right to demand help from the third power. Hanover was too weak to offer resistance, and was a member of that decayed organisation, the German empire, which was equally unable to provide help, but this was not England's fault nor her concern.

[1] Phillimore, *Lyttelton*, ii. 479 f.

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My argument, therefore, is that the prevailing idea of the impossibility of abandoning a state which was suffering on England's behalf was not justified by facts, but was inspired either by desire to serve the king, or was the expression of a vague conviction that the surrender of the electorate would be a severe blow to English interests.

For Pitt the latter argument was certainly decisive. He did not wish to oppose the king, and so to throw away his chances of entering the ministry; but the great point with him was the apparently irrational policy of leaving the king's private property to its fate. Thus, throughout the negotiations with Hardwicke, he was forced to express his views very cautiously, lest he should throw away the best cards in his hand, and deliver himself into the hands of the ministers. As soon as Pitt observed that the interests of Hanover could not be neglected, the chancellor interrupted him with an expression of delight, observing that they fully agreed upon the main principles, and that they both considered the defence of the electorate a necessity. Pitt, however, drew his attention to the fact that he had merely used the words 'the interests of Hanover should not be neglected'; he had certainly not declared his approval of the manner in which the government was attempting to protect those interests. He asserted his disapproval of the whole system of subsidy treaties; they were a heavy burden upon the revenue of the country, and the defence of the unprotected electorate against the overwhelming forces of its neighbour seemed impossible. He advised that the enemy's troops should be allowed to occupy the soil of Hanover, and that an indemnity should be paid to the king at the conclusion of the campaign; on the conclusion of peace they must stipulate for the unconditional restoration of the whole country, as they were accustomed to do in the case of English possessions which were difficult to retain.

Pitt was thus attempting to steer a middle course, from which he might easily diverge in either direction as circumstances should demand. His proposals were not particularly sound, but they formed a programme which did not coincide with the ministerial policy, and which, therefore, might be used as a basis for opposition. On the other hand, he was for the most part agreed with their main principle, so that if he were summoned to the cabinet he might easily fall in with

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their views. In any case the chancellor did not trouble himself concerning their differences on questions of foreign policy, if he could secure an agreement with Pitt upon other points. Upon the question of the treaty with Hesse, Pitt was able to retain his freedom of action. He declared himself ready to support it in view of the fact that the king had pledged his word, but wished first to discuss his course of action with his friends.

However, these negotiations ended in nothing. In view of Cumberland's importance, the ministers could hardly have been able to give the secretaryship to Pitt. The duke would have undoubtedly attempted to turn the king against such a step, for the reason that Pitt had declined to help himself and the war party. Apart from this, Newcastle was as little inclined as before to place at his side a superior intellect, which would have immediately taken the reins of government from his hands. If Pitt would not be contented with promises for the future, the ministry would have to make the best of his opposition.

Hardwicke secured a final conference between Pitt and Newcastle himself, which took place on December 22.[1] Pitt poured the whole vials of his wrath upon the unfortunate duke, and roundly informed him that under no circumstances would he support the two measures, that is to say, the subsidy treaties. The duke's despondency was considerably increased, the more so as his authority was denied even in his own camp. Legge, as chancellor of the exchequer, obstinately declined to sign the subsidy treaty with Hesse.[2] Newcastle complained to his friends that he could not carry on the government in this way, that he would place his resignation in the king's hands, and propose Lord Granville as his successor, he being the most suitable character for the post. Such assertions, however, were never to be regarded as serious when made by Newcastle. Even while he was speaking, his mind was generally intent upon finding some new issue from the difficulty.

So much, at any rate, was certain, that the situation could not continue, and that Newcastle could not maintain his opposition to the war party, if Pitt refused his help. The war

[1] Potter to Grenville, *Grenville Papers*, p. 138.
[2] *Bedford Correspondence*, ii. 166.

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party, soon after the king's departure, had attempted to push the disputes with France to a final point, while Newcastle strove to retard their efforts. During the last days of parliament, when George II. broke away from his ministers in order to visit his electorate, a fleet was fitted out under Admiral Boscawen, to capture the great French transport fleet which was taking out the new governor of Canada, M. Vaudreuil, and a considerable force of troops for the defence of the colony. Cumberland's friends were experienced in military affairs, and were anxious to begin the maritime struggle at the outset of the summer, for at that time of the year the French marine population were largely occupied with the cod fishery on the coast of Newfoundland, and the navy had a difficulty in securing a full complement of crews. On the other hand the English trading ships usually started out in the winter to carry the exports of the country to Spain and Portugal and the Mediterranean, so that a naval war offered more difficulties to England at that season of the year.[1] Newcastle either could not or did not venture to forbid the enterprise.[2] He gave no consideration to the breach of international laws involved in attacking and destroying a peaceful squadron. His calm consideration was applied only to more important issues, the disadvantage of the odium which such an act would evoke, or the advantage of destroying a considerable part of the enemy's naval power at the outset of an inevitable war. Finally, he concluded that in view of the great superiority of France, it was advisable to improve the situation by this means. It was fear of war which induced the duke to give his sanction to an enterprise which would certainly hasten the outbreak of war. The result of the attempt was unexpectedly disastrous. Boscawen encountered only three French ships of the line, which had been separated from the fleet by fog, off Newfoundland, and of these, after five hours' fighting, he succeeded in capturing only two, the *Alcide* and the *Lys*. The rest of the fleet reached Canada unimpeded, and landed the troops. Thus England incurred all the odium arising from a breach of international law without securing any corresponding advantage. Nor were the French in any way surprised. They had been con-

[1] Lapeyrouse-Bonfils, *Histoire de la marine française*, p. 387 f. Paris, 1845.
[2] Newcastle Papers, British Museum.

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vinced that the English would attack in such a case, and had made preparations to meet their onslaught.[1] Naturally they displayed great indignation, and the ambassador Mirepoix was ordered to return from London without taking formal leave, though the government did not decide upon a declaration of war.

Though upon this occasion Newcastle acted with the war party, their further measures did not meet with his approval. Before the news of Boscawen's action had reached England (the first report arrived on July 18) far greater naval preparations were begun,[2] with the object of checking a French fleet which had been organised in Brest. These new preparations were extremely expensive. Nearly two millions of money are said to have been expended for naval purposes alone up to the present moment, including the thirty ships of the line which were now equipped,[3] but Cumberland urged that if they were convinced that war was inevitable, they ought to bring all their forces into play.[4] It was necessary to secure the king's consent for the despatch of the squadron, and here again Newcastle was able to interfere. He had a constitutional dread of a French invasion, and was anxious not to denude the English Channel of ships of war. Nobody knew the destination of the Brest fleet, which was a highly powerful force. Officially it was to convoy a merchant fleet from Martinique, but in London it was thought that the fleet was destined for the Mediterranean, a view which the old duke did not share. He therefore sent a draft of a letter to Hanover, which the king was to send to the council of regency, demanding an explanation upon some unimportant points, before giving his permission. To this plan the king agreed, and the demands were sent to the regency, with the result that the expedition was delayed for some time; but the regency attempted to secure themselves against further hindrance by demanding the power of free naval action from

[1] Report of Prussian embassy in Paris, March 21, 1755; it had been represented to the ministers, 'que les Anglais qui sont très jaloux des progrès de la marine française ne manqueront pas au moment de rompre la paix, s'ils pouvaient se flatter de combattre cette escadre avec avantage, dont la défaite serait l'époque de la destruction de la marine française, qui ne pourrait se remettre de cet échec qu'en un grand nombre d'annees. . . .'

[2] Report of Prussian embassy.

[3] *Ibid.*, July 8, 1755.

[4] For this and the following, see Dodington, p. 343 f.

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the king, and about July 20 an answer in the affirmative arrived from Hanover.

Meanwhile the news of the unsatisfactory results of Boscawen's expedition arrived in London; the French government took a most serious view of the situation, notwithstanding the efforts of Newcastle to minimise its importance; Mirepoix left the city on July 21, and a declaration of war seemed imminent. It was, therefore, determined to send out Admiral Hawke with seventeen ships to attack all French ships of the line on the Atlantic coasts, an order which was soon extended to include merchantmen. As soon as the royal permission had arrived, the admiral weighed anchor, and this second breach of international law enabled him to inflict much damage upon the enemy.[1] The French made no attempts at reprisal, but confined themselves to the question of international right. When a French squadron captured a frigate with Sir Thomas Lyttelton, a brother of George, who was going to South Carolina as governor, King Louis immediately ordered the release of the vessel. However, England's situation was by no means favourable; on the one hand the strange passivity of the French government and their careful avoidance of offensive measures gave grounds for the apprehension of some dangerous stroke; moreover, in August news arrived that the English forces under General Braddock had been utterly destroyed in the valley of the Ohio, while marching upon Fort Duquesne. A dispute also began with Austria for the reason that the empress declined to defend her Netherland provinces with sufficient energy, whereby English interests were endangered in that quarter.

Such was the situation when Newcastle and Hardwicke attempted without success to secure Pitt's help. Their position was extremely dangerous, for if the opposition, led by Pitt, raised their voices against the administration, the unsuccessful conduct of the war and the subsidy treaties, Newcastle and his party were undoubtedly lost unless they were vigorously supported by the war party. A united attack by the opposition would have inevitably overthrown the ministry almost

[1] The Prussian ambassadors in London and Paris agree in describing the damage as wholly unimportant. Most of the ships which had started reached port unmolested. On the other hand there was considerable indignation even in London at the illegal action of the English government.

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immediately upon the opening of Parliament. It was thus a matter of vital importance to the duke to prevent this catastrophe, and to secure that upon which he laid most value. He could no longer prevent the breach with France, but he could leave that matter to the direction of others without diminishing his own power; it was very necessary under any circumstances to secure the passing of the subsidy treaties, as his championship of this subject made him indispensable to the king. Moreover, he was anxious to retain his treasury office, and the extensive patronage connected with it, together with the power of assigning appointments in general, as this was the basis of his great influence. He therefore applied once more to Fox and offered him the secretaryship of state in place of Robinson, who proposed to resign.

Fox had no reason for declining the offer. He was no longer bound to Pitt, who had himself dissolved their connection. He had opposed Newcastle only with the object of preventing his foreign policy, and in this he had been successful. The offer of the secretaryship was indeed a token of his success. The only sacrifice he was asked to make was to give his support to the king's continental policy; this implied no abandonment of his view that the war should be confined as far as possible to the sea and to the colonies; it implied only that a considerable amount of money was expended on the Continent, which he considered might have been better employed elsewhere. Of more immediate importance was the fact that Newcastle wished to retain the whole power of patronage, but the duke was able to arrange this delicate point, upon a basis that promised much and pledged him to little. The duke's main object was to surmount the immediate crisis, for the following year might see a complete change in the situation.

This alliance was further strengthened by the adherents of the Bedford group, which was won over in October. The Duke of Bedford shared Pitt's ideas in general, especially upon questions of continental policy,[1] and it was therefore not an easy task to secure his support for the new arrangements. This was done by an appeal to his patriotism; it was necessary, however, to prevent any meeting between him and Pitt during these decisive days, for Pitt might have convinced him of the

[1] Bedford to Gower, *Bedford Correspondence*, ii. 170.

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dangerous tendencies of the government. Bedford himself declined to accept office, as he previously had vowed never to serve again in this ministry, and did not wish to deny the opinions he had formerly professed. He did not, however, extend this prohibition to his adherents, who were allowed to accept posts, and Lord Gower thus became keeper of the privy seal.

Thus a fresh move on the part of the wily duke had again left Pitt in complete isolation, deprived of all influence and resources, except such as were secured by his marriage. He might acknowledge his defeat and enter the great alliance in a subordinate position or attempt to secure prestige and popularity by renewing his opposition. If he chose the second alternative, he would lose his lucrative office, which he could ill afford to do, for his first child was born just at the moment of this difficult decision. However, even this circumstance could not dissuade him from his choice of independence.

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CHAPTER XVI

RENEWED OPPOSITION

Pitt spent the summer of 1755 in his usual manner, except that he now passed a considerable period in the company of his wife. We find him alternately at Wotton and Stowe, whence business matters and discussions often recalled him to London.[1] At the beginning of August he returned to Hayes with Hester, but while she went thither direct, he turned aside to London, where the conference with Hardwicke, related in the previous chapter, took place on August 9.[2] In September we find him in Bath, which he visited unusually often in this year, but the expected birth of his first child forbade any continuous stay. On September 25 he writes to young Thomas Pitt to the effect that he is constantly in postchaises and living the life of a wandering Scythian, whence we may conclude that he visited his wife before or after the birth and perhaps on several occasions.

The first child was a girl, and was named Hester: the date of birth has not been determined. In the *Dictionary of National Biography* it is given as October 18, but in a letter to Hester of September 20 Pitt makes mention of the 'little woman,'[3] so that the birth must have taken place before that date. He shows signs of some slight disappointment by his repeated assertions that a daughter was no less welcome than a son and heir would have been 'for our non-existent latifundia.' The event must have taken place in London, for he writes to Thomas that he proposed to visit the City at the beginning of October, where he hoped to find Hester in good health. Afterwards, however, he returned to Bath, where we find him at Christmas time,[4] probably during the parliamentary recess.

[1] Cp. *Chatham Papers*, i. 139, 141, 148.
[2] Harris, *Hardwicke*, iii. 24.
[3] Chatham MSS.
[4] *Ibid.*, to Hester, December 27, 1755.

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On this occasion he had been obliged to leave his family for purposes of health; he was meditating the idea of setting up house in that watering-place. In a new quarter of the town, Circus No. 7, he built himself a house, which he fitted up as handsomely as possible for his young wife.[1] 'My love's dressing-room,' he writes in December, 'intends to rival the blue (in London) and will run it hard'; yet at this moment he had lost his chief source of income.

This catastrophe, which occurred at the beginning of the new session in November 1755, was merely the necessary consequence of the negotiations and agreements which had formerly taken place. The ministers were aware that Pitt proposed to resume his opposition, and they also knew that Fox would come over to their side, if he were entrusted with the conduct of foreign affairs; they therefore waited only to give Pitt time for the execution of the project he had announced, in order to begin the changes they had promised.[2] Pitt, however, as usual, was able to make effective and theatrical use of the change. His attacks upon the government in the previous year had been necessarily of an underhand nature: he had been obliged to turn his forces against a subordinate official, and could not bring the whole of his oratorical power into play. Now that he had determined to sacrifice his office, and to make no compromise with the ministry, he could throw off his reserve, and the speech which he delivered to the House of Commons on November 14 is one of the most important that we possess[3] from a rhetorical point of view.

The subject of the debate was the address in reply to the speech from the throne, which had recounted the recent measures of the government in laudatory terms with special reference

[1] Peach, *Life of Allen*, p. 136, where the building of the house is assigned to 1760, though the Chatham MSS., to Hester, September 20, 1755, states that it was begun in that year, 'Circus [the new quarter in the north-west part of the town] has made but small progress, and our house not so forward as I expected.'

[2] Fox to Mrs. Catherine Lowther, September 29, 1755: 'I must not take the seals till after the House meets, because a debate is expected on the first day. You will immediately see the consequence of my having a numerous attendance of friends in this my first essay of Administration. I therefore beg, madam, that you would be so good as to prevail on your friends to shew themselves mine, the night before the Parliament meets, at the cockpit.'—*Hist. MSS. Comm., Thirteenth Rep.*, App., part vii. p. 128.

[3] The details may be seen in Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, vol. ii.

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to the punctuality with which the naval preparations had been carried out. The efforts to secure an agreement with France were displayed in a most favourable light, while the subsidy conventions were dismissed with scanty mention. In the House of Lords the debate ran a comparatively peaceful course, and eventually only Temple protested against it, but in the House of Commons an unusually long and keen debate took place. The proposed address, after expressing general agreement with the king's measures, ran as follows: 'We look upon ourselves as obliged by the strongest ties of duty, gratitude and honour, to stand by and support your Majesty in disappointing or repelling all such enterprises as may be formed, not only against your kingdoms, but also against any other of your dominions, although not belonging to the crown of Great Britain, in case they should be attacked on account of the part which your Majesty has taken for maintaining the essential interests of your kingdoms.' Official expression was thus given to the theory which, as we have already seen, had been adopted by the champions of the ministerial policy. The political necessity of opposing the enemy upon German soil and providing opposition to a possible advance in that direction was not recognised; a moral obligation to action was asserted, which certainly did not exist. The opposition thus had an opportunity of opposing the continental policy upon a firm basis.

The first speakers on either side wasted time in discussions little to the point, and it was not until Pitt rose to speak, after midnight, that the really decisive issues were brought before the House. In contrast with his friend Legge, who had seceded with him from the government, and opened his opposition with a speech in polite, moderate, and carefully chosen terms, Pitt spoke in style of proud assertion, fully conscious of his superior powers. He began by expressing his dislike of the frequent and unparliamentary use which had been made of the king's name, complaining, as he had done in his speech the previous year against Delaval, that the dignity of the House was lowered in consequence, while making courteous reference to the king personally. He also refused to discuss the details brought forward by previous speakers, which tended to nothing but this, 'follow your leader.' He then came to the main point, the question of subsidies.

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'One,' he cried, referring to Lord Egmont, a friend of the late Prince of Wales, 'has argued so strangely, as if we were to turn our eyes to these mercenaries as a reserve, if our navies should be defeated. What! must we drain our last vital drop and send it to the North Pole! If you would traffic for succours with the Czarina, why, rather than her troops, did you not hire twenty of her ships? I will say why. Because ships could not be applied to Hanover. In the reign of Charles II. what efforts were made to procure fleets from Sweden and Denmark! Now the natural system of Europe is lost.' He then added some observations upon the value of sea power, the historical evidence for these remarks being somewhat inadequate: Carthage and Spain, he said, had accelerated their fall by entering upon continental wars, for which, as sea powers, they were unsuited. This part of his argument was somewhat laboured. A proposal to borrow twenty ships from Russia must have seemed a remarkable proposition, to any one who knew the hopeless condition of the Russian fleet. In any case, Pitt cannot have gained this information from his friend, Hanbury Williams, who was then ambassador in St. Petersburg. Besides, no one denied that the Russian troops had been intended for the protection of Hanover, whereas there had been no question of reinforcing the English naval power from this source. If Lord Egmont, the better to justify the subsidies, had insisted upon the value of the Russian troops to England, there was reason in his assertions. In any case Pitt's arguments would secure Egmont's refutation, at most, in the eyes of the few who were incompetent to judge, and who were deceived by catchwords.

The rest of the speech is directed against the assertion that England was bound by gratitude to defend Hanover. Pitt justifiably referred to the Act of Settlement, which had denied any legal obligation: 'We can,' he said, 'produce a charter against it'; a moral obligation he would only recognise upon the condition that Hanover had incurred the menaces of another power by her action on behalf of England. He also relied upon the fact that Hugo Grotius, the author of the *Jus belli ac pacis*, declared it is not necessary even *socium defendere si nulla spes boni exitus*. Thence with a bold transition he proceeded to discuss the different sources from which the address had been inspired, and thus he was led to make

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his famous comparison between the Rhone and the Saone. 'I,' he said, 'I who am at a distance from that *sanctum sanctorum* whither the priest goes for inspiration—I, who travel through a desert and am overwhelmed with mountains of obscurity, cannot so easily catch a gleam to direct me to the beauties of these negotiations. But there are parts of the address that do not seem to me to come from the same quarter with the rest. I cannot unravel this mystery; yes,' he cried, suddenly raising his hand to his forehead, 'I too am inspired! Now it strikes me! I remember at Lyons to have been carried to see the conflux of the Rhone and the Saone: the one a gentle, feeble, languid stream, and though languid, of no depth; the other, a boisterous and impetuous torrent.—But they meet at last, and long may they continue united to the comfort of each other, and to the glory, honour, and security of the nation.' After the debate Fox went, full of curiosity, to Pitt and asked him, 'Who is the Rhone?' Pitt replied, 'Is that a fair question?' 'Why,' said Fox, 'as you have said so much that I did not desire to hear, you may tell me one thing that I would hear. Am I the Rhone or Lord Granville?' Pitt answered, 'You are Granville.' Lord Temple, no bad commentator of Pitt's meaning, said that the Rhone meant the Duke of Cumberland, Fox or Lord Granville, that is, the war party; the Saone, the Duke of Newcastle, the chancellor, and Murray, *i.e.* the old Pelham group. As the Rhone is the violent, and the Saone the peaceful river, the simile is more or less suitable, though it would be better to limit the parallel to Fox and Newcastle, as was generally done upon that occasion.

The rest of the speech was concerned with the advantages of sea power, the successful employment of which had to some extent compensated for the disasters of the last war. Pitt asserted in consequence that the subsidy treaties were to be rejected, though it is difficult to find in his speech any conclusive arguments based upon actual fact. The oration is rather a personal attack than a connected argument. Pitt had no better programme to recommend or to carry out; he was anxious only to place as many obstacles as possible before the ministers and to discredit their policy and their capacity in the eyes of the Parliament and of the nation, exactly as he had done in his earlier career, with the exception that he did not give vent to the insolent violence of his former period.

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'He rose at one o'clock,' writes Horace Walpole to Conway on November 15, 'and spoke for an hour and thirty-five minutes: there was more humour, wit, vivacity, finer language, more boldness, in short, more astonishing perfections than even you who are used to him can conceive. He was not abusive, yet very attacking on all sides; he ridiculed my Lord Hillsborough, crushed poor Sir George, terrified the Attorney, lashed my Lord Granville, painted my Lord of Newcastle, attacked Mr. Fox, and even hinted up to the Duke of Cumberland.' The speech, as it has come down to us, retains but scanty traces of these brilliant qualities; it chiefly shows what was really least valuable and least effective, namely Pitt's course of argument, and gives but a feeble idea of his rhetorical power. It may be said that this speech was the declaration of the war which followed the threatening trumpet blasts of the previous session. Pitt required nothing from anybody, and therefore spoke without respect for anybody; he did not even shrink from possible irritation to the king himself in his strong expressions of disapproval for the whole of the Hanoverian policy, and thus proclaimed that he had given up all hope of winning the monarch's favour by submission to his will. He had made a long trial of that method, and thanks to Newcastle's influence had secured no advantage; he therefore preferred to make himself respected by the ruthless vigour of his opposition. The speech, as was to be expected, produced no practical result, and the address was adopted by a large majority.

It was obviously impossible, under these circumstances, for Pitt to continue in office. The fact that he and Legge had, while holding office, spoken against the ministerial policy was a sufficiently unusual fact; it was customary in such cases to resign office before beginning opposition. Pitt, however, declined to resign of his own will; he wished to appear a martyr to his own convictions and to the patriotic policy which he professed, while the ministry did not wish to begin their changes immediately, as otherwise Fox, who was forced to seek re-election upon his appointment, would have been absent from the debate upon the address. Immediately after the debate, however, on November 15 and following days, the task of reorganisation was begun. Fox was given the secretaryship of state for the north, while Holdernesse received

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that for the south, and Robinson became master of the wardrobe. On November 20 Pitt, Legge, George and James Grenville, who had remained faithful to their brother-in-law, were officially informed that the king had no further need of their services. George Lyttelton was made chancellor of the exchequer in place of Legge, while the other vacant offices were filled by adherents of the coalition, in particular by members of the war party. Lord Barrington took the place of Fox as secretary of war, Lord Darlington and Lord Dupplin held the post of paymaster in conjunction, while Bubb Dodington, who had come to an agreement with the ministerial party, became naval paymaster. As most of these appointments were recommended by Cumberland, they were known collectively as 'the duke's ministry,'[1] a name the more suitable as the whole of their policy was henceforward inspired by the king's son.

This change in the character of the government produced a new reaction of high importance both for the further development of affairs and for Pitt's future career. Hitherto the Princess of Wales had remained in the background, as her opinions coincided in general with those of the Duke of Newcastle. Cumberland, however, she regarded as her personal enemy and rival, with whom she would have to struggle in the event of a regency. His present high position was a danger to herself, the more so as she had rejected Fox's proposals for a coalition during the last summer.[2] She had also declared her high disapproval of the machinations of the war party and their long and expensive preparations.[3] She therefore declared against the promotion of Fox,[4] and Leicester House soon became a centre for the elements of the opposition, as it had been in her husband's lifetime. Here Pitt was obliged to turn for support, and it is notable that both he and George Grenville immediately communicated the fact of their dismissal to Lord Bute, the favourite of the princess. He was not slow to express his admiration of their behaviour, and added that the position of the private individual was alone honourable in such times.[5]

Pitt needed help of another kind, which was also afforded

[1] Almon, *Anecdotes*, p. 206.
[2] Dodington, p. 337.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 329.
[4] Harris, *Hardwicke*, iii. 41.
[5] Cp. *Grenville Papers*, i., November 1755.

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him immediately after his dismissal, namely, financial assistance. With the exception of some savings he had nothing except an income of £200 from his grandfather's legacy and about £400 a year from the legacy of the Duchess of Marlborough, and this was certainly not sufficient to meet the expenses of his high social position. He was anxious not to give up Hayes, which certainly cost him more than it brought in, while he was obliged to continue his house-building at Bath, and found a lodging in London almost a necessity. Life upon this scale demanded a far greater income, the more so as his family now began to increase; nor could he calculate with any security upon an early restoration to office in the present condition of affairs. He was playing for the highest stakes, but it might be long before the results declared themselves. Thereupon his rich friend and brother-in-law, Lord Temple, offered his help, and voluntarily proposed, through Hester, to give him a yearly income of £1000 'until better times,' as he expressed it.[1] Pitt accepted this generous present, which may not have been so entirely a surprise to him, with deep gratitude, and thus his pecuniary position was for the moment secured.

During the winter session Pitt, who was now free to act as he pleased, pushed his opposition vigorously. Space does not allow us to recount in detail the several debates, as Horace Walpole and others have handed them down, nor to discuss the many arguments and counter-arguments, the charges and refutations, which Pitt employed. For our purpose it is only necessary to see what his main object was, what means he employed, and what he ultimately attained.

He had never been so completely isolated. In the House of Commons he was supported only by his relations, the Grenvilles, some convinced opponents of the new policy, and a few members who were disappointed and dissatisfied. Nearly every division showed an overwhelming majority for the government, at any rate upon all questions of vital importance. Moreover, the ministry in power was by no means incompetent, and displayed considerable foresight and energy. Newcastle's pacific policy was thrown aside, and the war was undertaken upon rational principles, if not without mistakes. Upon the whole the efforts of the government were in accord-

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i., November 1755.

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ance with the ideas of Pitt; both wished to see peace maintained upon the continent of Europe, and to secure a vigorous prosecution of the war by sea and in the colonies. Only upon the means for obtaining this former object were they at variance. The ministers were anxious to protect Hanover against attack by concluding treaties with the states of Russia and Hesse, whereas Pitt, as he asserted, would prefer to leave Hanover to itself and to indemnify the province for its losses when peace had been secured. There is no doubt that Pitt must have realised that the ministerial policy was the more reasonable; it being agreed that Hanover was to suffer no permanent loss, it was certainly better and cheaper to avoid that loss by the comparatively moderate sacrifice of a few subsidies, than to incur the whole of the responsibility at a later period, and possibly to make other sacrifices of territory and advantage.

If our attention be solely concentrated upon this situation of affairs, it is clear that Pitt's opposition was madness. Without accomplishing anything for himself he aroused dissatisfaction and mistrust in the nation, exactly at a time when confidence and unity were indispensable to the welfare of the state in view of the immediate danger. He had sacrificed a high post and an important income, which could not easily be recovered, unnecessarily and without gaining any corresponding advantage. That position would have been secured merely by defending a policy which he himself regarded as correct, and by holding his tongue when he failed to agree, as he had done for years before. Very different was his position when he had formerly fought against Walpole and Carteret. At that time he had nothing to lose, for he held no office, and he was in the midst of great schemes of coalition which offered a real prospect of success, apart from the inheritance which his behaviour gained him. His present chances seemed unfavourable on every side. It might be thought that he was calculating upon a speedy rupture between Newcastle and Fox, and expecting to receive better terms from the duke in consequence, but at that time, as we shall see, he had no desire whatever to rejoin Newcastle. He had lost all confidence in the duke, who had for so long a period kept him in obscurity.

Pitt's action can only be understood upon the assumption that he had returned entirely to the point of view which he had adopted before accepting state office: he desired to secure

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the favour of the nation and of the successor to the throne, and upon this possibility he set his hopes. There was no room for him under present conditions. In alliance with Cumberland and Fox he could only play a subordinate part, which did not suit his views, while Newcastle would be a constant obstacle to his activity, and very possibly prove faithless to his interests. Pitt's hopes were set upon some event which would cause a fundamental change in the situation, either the death of the king or a series of military disasters, which would rouse the nation to demand other leadership. He wished to be the representative of this new policy which the new ruler would be inclined to accept through mere desire of change, and which the nation would be prepared to support so soon as the disastrous nature of the old policy had been demonstrated.

If this was Pitt's object, it was important for him not to introduce any actual modification of the existing policy, or to propose an absolutely new political system which he would be pledged to carry out, but rather to hamper the action of the ministry as far as possible. His task was to arouse a natural suspicion of the governmental methods, and when actual disasters took place, and some had already occurred, suspicion would speedily become conviction. If this change of feeling could be effected, the obvious remedy would be to call in the man who had pointed out the perversity of the present policy, to save the nation from disaster. Consistently logical arguments were thus not imperatively necessary; there was no need to convince his audience, least of all the more intelligent of them, provided that he could overwhelm his opponents by force of rhetoric, and thus gain an outward intellectual triumph. Even when he agreed with his adversaries' measures, his object was to find an opening for attack and to conceal the defects of his own proposals.

This was the mode of action which Pitt followed during the present session. We are staggered by the large number of untenable assertions which he made, by the unjustifiable charges which he heaped upon the ministry, exactly as he had done in his younger years, though he now acted with greater foresight. Of the impartial examination of facts there is no trace. But while he has thus much in common with most parliamentary fighters, his case was of a somewhat special

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character. Opponents of this kind are accustomed to represent some party programme which differs materially from the policy of the government, even though they may be obliged to obscure their real principles on account of their unpopularity; Pitt, however, desired nothing but power for himself; his differences of opinion were useful to him only as matter of opposition. We know that he had other principles, and that he proposed to bring them into force if he succeeded to power, but these matters were not now at stake. Upon every point at issue he might have had no difficulty in coming to an agreement with his enemies.

A special disadvantage was the fact that these enemies were both capable men and possessed of expert knowledge. Fox was a very different opponent from Robinson: he was well able to hold his own in a war of words, especially when the war degenerated into invective, while Pitt had repeatedly experienced and been forced to recognise the superiority of Murray in argument. To these opponents was now added a third personality, the legal authority Hume Campbell, who had been won over by Newcastle from the opposition, and added oratorical power to an insatiable avarice. Pitt was also forced to cross swords on several occasions with his former friend George Lyttelton, when he deliberately poured his contempt upon one whom he considered a deserter. On the opposition benches Pitt was associated with George Grenville and the two Townshends: George Townshend was a capable military officer who had fought in the Netherlands and in Scotland, but had incurred Cumberland's displeasure by his caricatures and pamphlets; Charles was a friend of Lord Halifax and had had long experience both on the board of trade and in the admiralty. For the latter reason he was especially valuable to his party, for he had a thorough knowledge of American affairs, such as few officials or members of Parliament possessed.

Pitt's chosen points of attack were the so-called Hanoverian policy and the conduct of the war. As regards the former, he continually fulminated from the patriotic point of view, and no doubt secured the approval of all who were incompetent to judge of the facts, while it was easy to discover mistakes in the conduct of the war, and thence to draw the most sweeping conclusions; nor was this a dangerous proceeding, provided

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there was no chance of full inquiry into the circumstances. Pitt, however, had his weak points, which his opponents did not fail to turn to full account. His constant changes of front, and the consequent inconsistency of his behaviour upon special points, his long silence upon questions which he now utterly condemned, his failure to secure power for himself, all this was thrown in his teeth upon every opportunity and under the most varied forms. At times, too, he gave vent to imprudent expressions which proved disadvantageous. A burst of scornful laughter was evoked when he asserted that he had always spoken with respect of Robert Walpole, adding the words, 'after the determination of his power.'[1] In the first place the statement was absolutely false, for he had continued the persecution of Walpole even after his fall, while the effect of his assertion was entirely destroyed by the addition of these words. He was attempting to show that he could behave honourably to his opponents, and succeeded only in showing, nor this entirely, that he could show respect to the defeated. He naturally vented his anger by a vigorous onslaught upon his mockers. On another occasion he gave his audience to understand that he could have had a higher office if he had been willing to fall in with the views of the government. This was not in accordance with the truth. Newcastle and Hardwicke had been willing to make an effort to gain him the secretaryship of state on the next vacancy, but they had not offered it to him. Fox thus gained a fine opportunity for delivering a keen thrust at Pitt while correcting his assertion.

After the ministry had been reorganised, the first necessity was to complete the naval crews and to strengthen the land army, in view of the outbreak of war. Pitt could not object to these measures if they were undertaken for purposes of war by sea and in the colonies. Contingents were demanded by the struggle in the American interior, the more so as France was reinforcing her troops in that quarter. In order, however, to attack the ministers Pitt proceeded to stigmatise their earlier reduction of the forces, and their long delay in passing a bill for their increase. Here he was entirely consistent with his former attitude, for he had opposed Pelham's motion to reduce the navy, notwithstanding his governmental

[1] Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, ii. 84.

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position. But the ministry had a reasonable reply when they asked him why he and his friends had not long since brought forward so necessary a proposition. To this Pitt returned that the ministers had concealed the approach of danger from the nation until they suddenly found themselves on the edge of the precipice. Obviously the whole affair was merely an argumentative duel intended to put his adversaries in the wrong.

Another question was that of the militia, which was raised by George Townshend, that is, by the opposition party. It was hoped by stimulating this organisation to do away with the only immediate reason for continental treaties, the need for foreign troops for protection against invasion, and to provide the country with an adequate means of defence drawn from its own population. Pitt seized this opportunity for developing his own ideas upon this subject, though with unusual prudence and reserve. He was well aware that a general armament for purposes of national defence was very popular in view of the apprehensions entertained of a standing army, and that the nation was flattered by the supposition that its untrained numbers were as valuable as the well-drilled foreign troops; on the other hand, Pitt's military knowledge was too profound for him to have any great confidence in the capacity of this undisciplined militia. He, therefore, proposed an institution, which was to retain the character of a militia force, and consequently the popularity attaching to this arm of the service, but which amounted in reality to the formation of a reserve army. Only a limited number were to be enlisted, some 50,000 or 60,000 men, the flower of the nation, and these were to undertake to serve throughout the kingdom, and not, as previously, in their own counties alone. They were to be a definitely organised and standing body of troops, paid by the state and wearing a simple uniform, were to be drilled twice a week and reviewed four times a year by the lord-lieutenants of the several counties. He was careful to characterise this organisation as an extension of the standing army; the officers were to be drawn from the richer landed proprietors, and the non-commissioned officers from the regular army. As regards the expense, Pitt calculated that it would amount to far less than the average amount paid in subsidies, and it was only natural

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to fear that mercenary troops from the Continent might be used for other purposes than the occasional protection of England.

Upon consideration of this project, it must be admitted that the proposal was an achievement of real importance. Whether Pitt evolved these ideas himself or derived them from the wider military experience of George Townshend, who drew up the militia bill in 1757, cannot be determined. In any case Pitt would hardly have acted without taking the advice of his military friends. None the less the proposal is clear evidence of the great interest which he took in military matters, and of his close acquaintance with military detail, for had he not been able to claim the essential points of the scheme as his own, he would hardly have been induced to support the project. Once again it is obvious that Pitt was at bottom a soldier, though circumstances and his own physical infirmities had prevented him from following the military profession.

During the discussion upon the bill, which was introduced as Pitt desired by the opposition, George Lyttelton appeared as its chief and by no means despicable opponent. He rightly emphasised the fact that as the militia increased in military capacity, so would they become more dangerous to the freedom of the nation. 'The whole nation,' he said, 'cannot deceive the whole nation, though 60,000 men may do so.' Here he hit the weak point in Pitt's argument. Apprehensions that the constitution would be menaced might have been utterly groundless; none the less Pitt was attempting to found a larger native army without first refuting these fears, and destroying the deep-rooted prejudice against a standing army, so that he was open to attack on this side, and it was reasonable to point out to him that the dangers he had tacitly admitted as involved by the maintenance of a standing army were no less real in the case of a militia army. Lyttelton also went on to prove that the militia were not capable of the services rendered by mercenary troops, and could not be employed upon foreign service.

Thus the project was a compromise conditioned by the interests of the state, and a desire to secure the national favour, but it was precisely the pressure of these conditions which led to a sound result. The antiquated principle of universal military service had been thrown overboard upon

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the one hand, as also had the principle of a mercenary army, and the idea of a national army properly trained had been formed, if as yet in incomplete detail. Pitt's militia was a force capable of development, and its failure to develop was primarily due to the fact that no urgent need arose for its services. Eventually it seemed more convenient to purchase the required military protection in the old manner. Strangely enough the bill was passed, but was thrown out by the Lords: Newcastle and Hardwicke were very strongly opposed to it.[1] They were afraid that such an institution might inspire the peaceful citizens with a spirit of militarism which they regarded as a calamity. It was not until a much later period, when the old ministers were no longer members of the government, that the law was finally passed. Pitt's reputation as a military expert was considerably increased by this affair.

The great event of this session was naturally the debate upon the subsidy treaties, which came up in December; here again it is not worth our while to go into details. Pitt's ideas were those which he had formerly expressed to Charles Yorke and Newcastle; he wished to abandon Hanover, and to indemnify her losses at a later date. He attempted, however, as did previous speakers on the opposition side, to attack the treaties on the ground that their conclusion was unconstitutional. In the Act of Succession of William III. of 1701 it had been laid down that should the crown fall to a foreigner the nation was not thereby pledged to interfere in a foreign war without the consent of Parliament. The opponents of the ministry maintained that these treaties were calculated to lead to a continental war; as such a war was illegal without the consent of Parliament, treaties leading to this result must also be illegal, and their conclusion was tantamount to a breach of the Act of Succession. This conclusion was

[1] Newcastle to the Duke of Devonshire, April 10, 1756: 'We have a militia bill, which may give us some trouble, as many of our best friends in the House of Commons are for it, from their zeal; but I am afraid the principles of it may prove *dangerous* to this country. The expense would be certain and immense, viz. £200,000 per annum at least. The use very uncertain. If the scheme should succeed it must undoubtedly increase greatly the power of the crown. But that which of all things I dread, it would breed up our people to a love of arms and military government, and divert them from their true business, husbandry, manufactures, etc., and I think, upon the whole, would tend more to make this a military country and government than any scheme I have yet heard of' (Newcastle Papers, British Museum).

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erroneous, as Murray with legal perspicacity proved, and Pitt made vain attempts to refute the historical evidence brought forward by the attorney. The weakness of his arguments consisted in the fact that the treaties were of an expressly defensive character, and aimed rather at preventing than provoking a continental war. This fact was decisively proved by the conclusion of a defensive alliance shortly afterwards with Prussia, the very power which the opposition asserted was menaced by treaties.

This important business was concluded before Parliament continued its discussions in the new year; it was the famous Westminster Convention of January 16, 1756; it marked a turning-point in the relations of the powers, but was in no respect the cause of any general rearrangement of existing alliances, for it was a necessary consequence of the existing changes in mutual relations, and led insensibly to their completion. In view of the many contrary opinions upon this subject, it is worth our while to devote some discussion to the point, and to explain the policy of the English ministers.

From an early period, and especially since the last great war, England had been in alliance with Austria. This alliance had been directed against France and Prussia, by whom both powers felt themselves threatened at different points. In January 1755 negotiations were opened between the two courts upon the respective share which each power should take in the work of defence, with the result that a strong divergency of opinion became manifest.[1] England demanded that Austria should undertake the protection of Hanover should that province be attacked, and should guarantee to divert the forces of France if France should menace the coasts of Great Britain. England also demanded that a strong body of imperial troops should be stationed in the Austrian Netherlands and in Luxemburg, to defend these provinces and to stimulate the Dutch to join the alliance. On the other hand, the Vienna court asserted that the menacing attitude of Prussia prevented them from offering so large an amount of help,[2] and

[1] Correspondence of the English ambassador at Vienna, Public Record Office.

[2] Memorial of Count Colloredo: 'C'est donc le Roy de Prusse qui dérange toutes les mesures et qui par conséquent expose l'Angleterre et la Hollande aux plus grands dangers en occupant les forces de l'Impératrice. Il n'y a que la Russie et l'usage qu'on fera du secours qu'on en obtiendra qui puisse remédier. . . .'—Public Record Office.

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advised the English government to apply for the protection of Hanover to Russia, with which country Newcastle had already begun negotiations; the Austrians further demanded that England should collect an army from among the German princes, which should be adequate for the defence of the Netherlands, and should encourage the states-general to join the alliance.

The divergency in the views of the parties negotiating became more strongly pronounced as the proceedings continued. England's policy was to maintain peace upon the Continent and to claim the help of her allies only in the event of hostile aggression; Austria, on the other hand, regarded with apprehension the forward policy of King Frederick, and considered that her only safety lay in a general attack upon Prussia, during which she desired England to cover her rear. When it became obvious that the English ministry would consent to no such plan, and was insisting that the Austrian Netherlands should be given the means of self-defence, Austria proceeded to consider an alliance with France, a change of policy which the English ministers had never contemplated. The Austrian minister scornfully pointed out to the English ambassador that the sea powers had always regarded the protection of the Netherlands as their privilege, so that Austria was no longer accustomed to provide for her possessions in this quarter.[1]

The London cabinet was of the opinion that the menacing attitude of Prussia would prevent the Austrians from despatching any troops to Flanders, and thus arrived at the conviction that all difficulties would be removed by an agreement to guarantee the neutrality of Prussia. If Austria had nothing to fear from King Frederick, she would be able to give up that forward policy which was, indeed, actuated only by the necessity of defence, and she would then be able to devote herself entirely to English interests. On this point the cabinet was hopelessly wrong; Austria was anxious, not only to repel all danger, but also to crush her Prussian opponents with the help of a coalition. The English ministers found Prussia very ready to meet them half-way, and King Frederick began that series of negotiations which re-

[1] Précis de la réponse verbale du Comte Kaunitz à Mr. Keith, June 1, 1755. —Public Record Office.

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sulted in the defensive alliance of Westminster. Both parties pledged themselves to unite their forces for resistance to any foreign invasion of Germany, in which terms the Netherlands were not included. The whole document seemed inspired by pacific intentions, and the general opinion in London was that Prussia had surrendered her aggressive policy. This opinion, however, was entirely erroneous.[1] Frederick's only object in agreeing to the convention was to secure himself against Russia and to gain the support of England at the court of St. Petersburg, where English influence and English money were always paramount. He certainly had no idea of limiting his power of action; on the contrary, he thought he was now more than ever in a position to carry out his plan of attacking Austria in isolation, and need only wait for an opportunity which would represent Austria as the aggressor. This opportunity soon occurred, and England was then forced to put a good face upon the matter.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the convention the English ministry triumphantly informed the Vienna court of the fact that Austria might now lay aside all apprehension with regard to Prussia and devote herself entirely to the task of repelling the aggressions of France.[2] Instead of the expected expressions of joy at this fortunate change in the situation, the ambassador received only a curt expression of thanks, and was informed from another quarter that Austria was beginning to make overtures to France.[3] The assurance that England would fulfil her obligations in case of aggression

[1] How mistaken were the general opinions in London upon Frederick's intentions may be seen from Newcastle's letter to Hardwicke of December 28, 1755. He there observes: 'His Majesty imagined (and with reason) that this plan of confining the war to England and the sea was the great reason which induced the King of Prussia to make the late overtures to us; but it is at the same time a proof of the sincerity of those overtures.' On the other hand, Frederick's object was to put an end to the Anglo-French war, and, by remaining on good terms with both powers, to leave himself free to attack Austria. In fact his first action after the convention was to negotiate for peace between the western powers.

[2] Holdernesse to the ambassador Keith on January 20, 1756: 'The Austrian ministers are now freed from the apprehensions they expressed of the King of Prussia's power, and the Empress-Queen's dominions in Germany secured by this convention. . . . The court of Vienna may now exert themselves in repelling any attempt which the violence and injustice of the court of France may prompt her to form against other parts of the Austrian dominions.'—Public Record Office. Similarly Newcastle to Sir Joseph Yorke at the Hague on February 10, 1756.—Newcastle Papers.

[3] Keith to Holdernesse, February 11, 1756.

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on the part of Prussia, and would also appeal to the Czarina of Russia,[1] produced no change in the attitude of the Austrian government. The ambassador afterwards had a long audience with Maria Theresa in May, when the empress plainly informed him that no earthly considerations would induce her to join an alliance to which the King of Prussia was a party.

In Russia also this change in the situation aroused general disapproval.[2] Hanbury Williams kept silence upon the subject until the final conclusion of the Anglo-Russian alliance after a long series of delays; when he thereupon announced the result of the Westminster convention he had great difficulty in avoiding an open breach. Russia had made her treaty with England with the sole object of being able to attack Prussia, which was indeed the purport, if not the literal meaning, of the treaty; now the other party to the treaty had concluded a similar arrangement with Prussia herself, and this deprived the Russians of the spoil they hoped to secure. Though the compact was not annulled, the court of St. Petersburg declined absolutely to protect Hanover against any other power than Prussia.

A consideration of this course of events will show that England had eventually reached a comparatively favourable situation. The protection of Prussia had been secured for Hanover, and it was thus possible to dispense with Russian help. Friendly relations again had been maintained with the Czar's empire, which promised a continuance of the important commercial connection between Russia and England. Little was now to be expected from Austria, but if Austria allied herself with France there would be no further need for anxiety about the Netherlands. Public opinion in England declined to believe in the possibility of a real alliance between these traditional enemies, or in the support of a French invasion by Austria. The only displeasing circumstance was the fact that under existing conditions the support of the Dutch was very improbable. It was impossible to guarantee adequate security for Holland against French invasion, and this was a great disadvantage, as it involved the loss of England's only ally by sea and in the colonies. Thus England remained in isolation against France, whose power was still regarded as overwhelming.

[1] Keith to Holdernesse, May 16, 1756, containing also a report of the audience of Maria Theresa.

[2] From the St. Petersburg embassy reports.

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Upon the whole the new policy met with general approval from the nation. The suggestions from the opposition that the ministers were anxious to provoke a continental war for the advantage of Hanover were now discredited, and a solution of the Hanoverian problem had been apparently obtained. Hence the parliamentary debates upon the subject were entirely peaceful, and Pitt found little opportunity for damaging the credit of the ministry. He attempted on one occasion to ridicule his friend Lyttelton, and received the ready answer that truth was a better reply than eloquence, which indeed contained an admirable summary of Pitt's attitude. On the other hand Pitt aroused laughter by referring to Lyttelton as 'my friend' and then rapidly correcting himself with the words 'the gentleman,' to which Lyttelton replied, 'If he is not my friend, it is not my fault.' Unimportant skirmishes of this kind were of frequent occurrence, but there was no great or decisive struggle. Not until April did an important debate arise, when the advisability was discussed of bringing over foreign troops for the protection of England. The French were making vigorous preparations in their southern harbours, which aroused the general apprehension of an invasion, and it was thought that Dutch, Hanoverian, and Hessian troops would be necessary for purposes of defence. Holland declined to send help on the ground that the request was inopportune, and the ministers therefore brought in a motion for presenting an address to the king, requesting him to send over his Hanoverian troops. Pitt, in accordance with his principles, opposed the motion, declaring that the nation was strong enough to undertake the task of its own defence. He also doubted the wisdom of giving the king advice which would expose his own province to danger, but none the less the motion was carried. During the following days the previous proposals for the employment of foreign troops came up for discussion, and Pitt also took this opportunity of denouncing the government policy.[1] He asserted that the expense was unduly great, and that the money might have been better employed in raising English troops; that the measures for the protection of the country had been begun too late, otherwise a fleet might have been sent to the defence of Minorca (for the safety of which fears had arisen); and that within the cabinet one member threw responsibility on another, with the result

[1] Walpole, *Memoirs of George II.*, ii. 188 f.

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that everything was mismanaged. He paid a somewhat ironical compliment to the king by emphasising the adroitness with which, as Elector of Hanover, he had negotiated with the ministers who represented English interests. 'There,' he said, 'one saw the difference; nothing but good flowed from the king, nothing but ruin from his servants.' Fox then very reasonably asked whether Pitt wished to have one sole minister, to which Pitt replied that he asked only for a definite system and for decisive action. In reality he was thinking of autocratic power, and of such power in his own hands, which, indeed, he was soon to secure, as far as military matters were concerned. The ministry was certainly not lacking in decision, though its measures were at times erroneous, nor was it able to repair existing deficiencies in a moment. The only dangerous member was Newcastle, whose nervousness might prove disastrous, and who was largely to blame for the misfortune which ultimately shattered the position of the ministry.

In May the Prussian convention was brought before Parliament, together with a demand for war expenses to the amount of one million of money. Pitt strongly criticised the proposal, though the charges which he brought forward were again unsupported by real evidence. 'We have provoked,' he said, 'before we were able to defend, and have neglected after provocation; we are left inferior to France in every quarter; the vote of credit has been misapplied to secure the electorate; we have bought a treaty with Prussia by sacrificing our rights.' To what extent all these charges were true he did not state, with the exception of the last point, and indeed the task would have been difficult. His conclusion was that Newcastle must retire. 'If you see a child,' he said, 'driving a go-cart on the edge of a precipice, with that precious freight of an old king and his family, surely you are bound to take the reins from his hands.' The statement in itself was correct, but Pitt was wrong if he supposed that the duke actually held the reins of power. His continual recurrence to the dangerous situation of Minorca was of importance; he could hardly have foreseen the loss of the island at that time, or have wished to do more than arouse apprehension, but the fulfilment of his predictions largely increased his reputation.

Some days later he gave his views upon the Prussian convention, chiefly selecting for criticism the fact that a sum of £20,000 was to be paid to the contracting party, to indemnify

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those merchants whose property had been confiscated in the former war. The emphasis laid upon a wholly unimportant matter, a concession indeed which could not be avoided if friendly relations with Prussia were to be maintained, was naturally only the outcome, like the majority of Pitt's charges, of his desire to find material for criticism. It would serve no purpose to devote serious consideration to the point. This, however, was a task that his parliamentary opponents, and in particular the learned lawyer Murray, were obliged to undertake, and it was performed in admirable style. Pitt's opposition would have been more serious, and perhaps more to the point, if he could have known the news which Newcastle had received from France.

The duke had been able to secure by some secret means copies of the letters from the Swedish ambassador in Paris, Bunge, to the minister Höpken, in Stockholm.[1] As the relations of Sweden with France were entirely friendly, the information contained in these letters might be regarded as reliable, and for that reason they largely influenced the action of the English ministers. From these letters it appeared that the court of Versailles was attempting to conceal its vexation at the Westminster convention, that Germany was now regarded as forbidden ground, and that there was no further intention of attacking Hanover, but that the whole of the French power was to be employed directly against England: an expedition was to be sent against Minorca from Spanish harbours, which would be used with or without permission, while a simultaneous invasion was to be made of England, Scotland, and Ireland, though the attack upon these latter countries was to be nothing more than a feint. Apart from this the French fleet was to be brought up to the level of the English, English trade was to be destroyed by privateering, and strong reinforcements were to be sent out to the American troops. It was asserted that these projects were perfectly possible, as France had neither attack nor obstacle to fear from any other quarter. This was exactly the kind of news to horrify Newcastle, who had an enormous respect for the overwhelming power of France—*la puissance exorbitante de la France* is his own expression[2]—and the other members of the government were inclined to believe it, the more so as

[1] They are to be found in the Newcastle Papers in the British Museum.
[2] Newcastle to Münchausen, February 12, 1756: Newcastle Papers.

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the French forces were at that moment concentrating on the north coast. Hence the disinclination to send an adequate force to the Mediterranean. Admiral Anson, the chief of the admiralty, declined to provide transports, as he feared to weaken the defences of the north.[1]

At the beginning of March preparations were made in Toulon and Marseilles for the expedition against Minorca, which had been in English hands since the war of the Spanish Succession, and which the French government now proposed to return to Spain, upon condition of receiving Spanish help for the war. The Duke of Richelieu undertook the command, and a squadron of transports set sail at the end of the month. There was nothing to prevent the immediate blockade of the ill-prepared capital, Port Mahon, with its fort St. Philip. So soon as England received news of the departure of the French squadron, an admiral was sent out to the Mediterranean with such ships as could be spared; this admiral was John Byng, whose sad fate is closely connected with Pitt's rise to his first official post. Before the news of his action arrived, the English government determined to put an end to the doubtful situation, and sent a declaration of war to France, on account of the attack upon Minorca, on May 17, 1756, which was duly answered by the court of Versailles.

Thus we come to the turning-point in Pitt's life. For a long time he had waited and hoped, had fought and agitated, to master the contrary currents which carried him from his goal. At length circumstances had changed in his favour. Not for long was he to be a mere spectator of the war, nor was he again to occupy a secondary position. In a short time he found himself in possession of a post, which, if it did not entirely correspond with his high expectations, provided him with full opportunity for the exercise of his energies. Thus the period of his rise comes to an end, and the time of his power begins.

[1] Newcastle to Fox, May 8, 1756: Newcastle Papers. The duke shared these fears.

END OF VOL. I.

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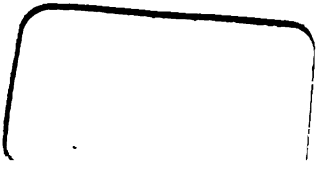

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